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Milton's Attitude Toward the Bible as Reflected in his Poetry and Prose Works, and in his Letters.

by

Mabel Ruth Conibear, B. A.

University of Alberta.

A Thesis

Submitted to the University of Alberta in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Edmonton, Alberta April, 1932.

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Under the Direction of Dr. E. K. Broadus.

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I

INTRODUCTION

If Milton had taken Holy Orders as he had originally intended, and had settled down in some quiet country living or spent his later years as a bishop or archbishop of the Established Church, he would have preached the gospel all his life; and yet it is more than possible that there would have been preserved for us to-day little record of his personal opinion of the Bible and its teaching. But as it was, the circumstances of his life practically forced him to leave behind a great body of work, in which he sets forth throughout the years, very definite opinions on the Bible and on questions related to its precepts.

Quite early in his life, in defence of his revolt against what he considered tyranny in the Church of England, he expressed in five passionately written tracts his views on church and church government. A few years later, in an effort to throw off the shackles of what was, in his opinion, another form of tyranny, he rebelled against the existing laws regarding marriage and divorce, leaving us an outline of his own interpretation of the Bible on this question. Under the Cromwellian government, it fell to his lot, as Latin secretary of state, to free the Parliamentar-

ians from the charge of having executed God's anointed, and this work gives us still further evidence of Milton's use and interpretation of scripture to support his own position on practical questions.

After deciding not to enter the service of the church, Milton allied himself with no profession, but began preparations for his great life-work: the task of writing some poem "which the world would not willingly let die". This determination to immortalize the English language in verse resulted in three great poems, all of which -- Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes -- are based on Biblical subjects, and provide us with further material for our discussion of Milton's attitude toward the Bible. Add to this the fact that in his later years, Milton compiled, with the Bible as his only source, an independent theological treatise, in which he gives his considered and mature opinion on all problems of a theological nature which are discussed throughout the rest of his writings, and on many others in addition.

Now, from this wide range of material, what may we select as evidence of Milton's personal attitude toward the Bible? Every page of his work, prose and poetry, is colored with Biblical phraseology, but for our purpose this really means very little; true, it

is evidence that he was familiar with the Bible and influenced by it, but it is an influence of style chiefly, for it would have been easily possible for him to enjoy the Bible as a piece of literature, and read it so often that the Biblical phrases crept in unawares but yet not have been at all submissive in his philosophy to its teachings or precepts. May we then, take as reliable evidence, Milton's own statements scattered throughout his writings regarding the Bible? * To a certain extent we may; this, at least, gives us suggestions as to the trend of his thoughts during the years, but, at best, when we have gathered together all the passages in which he directly refers to the Bible, we have accumulated evidence only of what Milton himself thought he believed on the subject. What he really believed, or to what extent he was really obedient to the scripture, is shown much more reliably in his conclusions regarding questions, practical and otherwise, which are directly related to the teachings of the Bible. Since the practical questions are dealt with first in the order of time in his works, and since it is through the struggle

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*See Appendix for collection of such passages arranged in chronological order.

with immediate problems that many of a man's abstract theories are determined or developed, it will be well to consider in relation to the word of the Bible first Milton's attitude towards three practical problems to the solution of which a large proportion of his prose works is devoted: church, divorce, and divine right of kings; and after this to turn to a consideration of more abstract theological questions.

II

THE CHURCH

The church, particularly in relation to its government, was one of the most vital and discussed topics of Milton's age; all classes took a share in its discussion and feeling was strong on all sides. Shortly before the Hampton Court Conference of 1604, the king received a petition, which claimed to present the demands of at least a thousand ministers within the Church of England, asking that a little more allowance be made for the Puritan party in the Church. But at the Convocation of 1604 the constitution of the Church was made even more rigid, and Canon 7 stated: "whosoever shall affirm that the government of the Church of England by archbishops, bishops, deans and archdeacons, and the rest that bear office in the same, is anti-Christian, repugnant to the word of God, let him be excommunicated ipso facto and not restored."

This attempt to exact conformance was not lessened as the years went on, and when parliament closed in 1628-9, even after Eliot had insisted that the tyrannical power of the bishops was likely to be the ruin of the nation, the last words of Parliament on the subject were: "Whoever shall bring in innovation of religion, or by favour or countenance seem to extend

Popery or Arminianism or other opinion disagreeing from the true and orthodox Church , shall be reputed a capital enemy to this kingdom and commonwealth." In 1640, a body of Seventeen New Canons was drawn up, and among the most important was Canon 6, which required an oath to be taken by all clergymen of the Church of England as follows: "I. . . . . do swear that I do approve the doctrine and discipline or government established in the Church of England as containing all things necessary to salvation . . . . . nor will I ever give my consent to alter the government of the Church by Archbishops, Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons, etc., as it stands now established and by right ought to stand." In the same year there was a petition from the City of London signed by 15,000 persons, and presented by Alderman Pennington, one of the members for the city. It began as follows: "Whereas the government of Archbishops and Lord-Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons, etc., with their courts and ministrations in them hath proved prejudicial and very dangerous, both to the Church and Commonwealth" -- and concluded: "We therefore, most humbly pray and beseech this Honourable Assembly, the premises considered, that the said government, with all its dependencies, roots and branches,

may be abolished and all laws in their behalf made void, and the government, according to God's word, may be rightfully placed among us." Within the next two months, there were Anti-Episcopal petitions from three counties together; also one from the City of Gloucester; and The Ministers' Petition, signed by 700 ministers of the Church of England. This last, without actually asking that episcopacy be abolished, requested that Bishops be removed from Parliament, and all clergymen from secular offices, also asking that the body of the clergy be allowed a share in ordination and other ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The controversy reached its height in the years immediately following; and champions came forward on both sides. In 1640, Bishop Ussher published a collection of tracts at Oxford, including a defence of episcopacy; in the same year Wm. Prynne wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Antipathy of the English Lordly Prelaty both to Royal Monarchy and to Civil Unity". In 1642, Jeremy Taylor, who considered the episcopal form of government essential to the existence itself of the church, wrote "The Sacred Order and Offices of Episcopacy". Laud, of course, took the same attitude and described the equality of clergy as the "mother

of confusion." In the meantime, however, the climax had come in 1641 when twelve of the thirteen bishops whom the Commons had attempted to incapacitate by impeachment after the Convocation of 1640, sent in a formal petition before the King and the House of Peers. The petition appealed "against all laws, orders, votes, resolutions and determinations as in themselves null and of none effect, which in their absence . . . . . have already been passed, as likewise against all such as shall hereafter pass, in that most honourable House". The Commons, who had long been attempting to exclude the Bishops from the House altogether, were not slow to take advantage of their opportunity, and that same afternoon they accused the twelve Prelates of high treason in that they had attempted "to subvert the fundamental laws of the realm and the being of Parliament". The offenders were immediately sent to prison, and England was practically cleared of Bishops for the time being.

Meanwhile, what part has Milton been taking in this controversy? We know that his father belonged to the Church of England and that Milton himself had, "in the intentions of parents and friends" and in his own resolutions, been destined to its service. But

even before graduation from Cambridge, he had altered his mind, because as he later said, he saw "what tyranny had entered the church", and "that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure or split his faith". Now had come his opportunity to help purify the church and to oppose its tyranny; and this he proceeded to do.

It was late in May or early in June of 1641 that Milton wrote his first pamphlet: "Of Reformation in England and the Causes that have hitherto hindered it". This he followed almost immediately by two other pamphlets: "Of Prelatical Episcopacy", in June or July, in answer to Bishop Ussher's work entitled "The Judgment of Doctor Rainolds touching the Original of Episcopacy"; and during the same summer, "Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence against Smectymnuus" written to support the Smectymnuans, one of whom was his personal friend and former tutor, Thomas Young, in their controversy with Bishop Hall. In February of 1642, the king signed the Bishops' Exclusion Bill and the practical question regarding episcopacy was settled for the time. However, there was a lively

controversy still floating in the air, and the battle continued to be waged over the relative merits of the episcopal versus the presbyterian form of government. In March of this year, there appeared Milton's fourth work on the subject, "The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty", in which he deals with the theoretical side of the question, and discusses at length the relation between church and state. The "Apology for Smectymnuus," his fifth and last pamphlet in the series, appearing in the spring of the same year, gave him the last word in the debate with Bishop Hall and his son, and marked the conclusion of Milton's share in the controversy. Now, to come to the material in these pamphlets and the light they throw on Milton's attitude towards the Bible; the discussion, as far as Milton's part in it was concerned, may be classed under three main topics which represent three steps in the attempt to throw off ecclesiastical tyranny.

1. The Corruption of the Clergy and the Retention of Ceremonies in the Church.
2. Church Government.
3. Church and State.

The first stage in the argument represents a

protest against faults which could have been removed without necessitating any radical alteration in the actual government of the church. At this period, Milton is merely attempting to bring back the high ideals of the first teachers of the gospel, and to approach the simplicity of the apostles' church. As his argument proceeded, however, his protests began to demand a more radical change, and extended to the government itself of the church.

This stage of the controversy shows Milton as t the democrat, the defender of the rights of man, attempting to change the autocratic government of the church of England for the democratic Presbyterian system. To put it very briefly, the government of the Church of England is monarchial: the whole system represents a priestly hierarchy with the bishops at the top and the priests and deacons at the base; the ordination of the priests and deacons is in the hands of the bishops alone, and the appointment of the bishops themselves is vested in the crown. The Church of England defends episcopal government by the claim that Christ founded the church, put Peter at its head, and associated with him a governing body of apostles. These apostles were to be succeeded by the monarchial

episcopate, and the primacy was to devolve on the successors of Peter. Thus, not only do they insist that their church is based upon the original church of Christ, but also that they hold their position in direct descent from the early teachers. The government of the Presbyterian Church, on the other hand, is democratic: the ministers are equal in rank, elected by the people, and the laity have a share in the government of the church. And this is the form which Milton sets out to prove prescribed in the New Testament.

The third step of Milton's anti-episcopal campaign carried him still further, and led him to advocate a complete separation of church and state. The Church of England tends to be closely connected with the state in two, at least, important respects; first, as we have seen, the appointment of the bishops is vested in the crown itself; and secondly the bishops of the church have their seats in the house of lords. The Stuarts' political maxim of the Divine Right of Kings naturally helped to strengthen the connection, for the absolute power of the king spread into all fields, secular and religious. The Stuarts rigidly enforced the Catholic and episcopal nature of the

church, and refused to hear of dissent; in return the church upheld the absolutism of the monarch and preached obedience to him. Milton, on the other hand, ardently desired complete separation of church and state, and as we shall see supported his position by arguments from the New Testament.

Ritualism in the Church and Corruption of the Clergy

This division of Milton's protest represents a very sincere attempt on his part to bring back the lofty ideals and spiritual courage of the early teachers of the church and to remove the elaborate ritual which he felt was suffocating and killing all the spiritual help and beauty of tha gospel teaching. He is bitterly eloquent against the power and wealth of the bishops, against the inequality in the different ranks of the church: "If they had one thought upon God's glory, and the advancement of Christian faith, they would be a means that with these expenses, thus profusely thrown away in trash, rather churches and schools might be built, where they cry out for want, and more added where too few are; a moderate maintenance distributed to every minister, that now scarce sustains his family with bread, while the prelates

revel like Belshazzar with their full carouses in goblets, and vessels of gold snatched from God's temple . . . ." The bishops no longer seek to spread among their flock the word of God, but endeavour rather to promote their own interests and grope out in all directions for more and more power: ". . . instead of diligent and fervent study in the Bible, they covet to be expert in canons and decretals, which may enable them to judge and interpose in temporal causes, however pretended ecclesiastical. Do they not hoard up pelf, seek to be potent in secular strength, in state affairs, in lands, lordships, and domains, to sway and carry all before them in high courts and privy-councils, to bring into their grasp the high and principal offices of the kingdom?" (Reformation in England, pp. 402, 404).

His protest is, of course, directly in accordance with the teachings of scripture; both in the spirit and the letter: "For the New Testament emphasizes throughout the unimportance of material wealth or power as compared with spiritual wealth, with treasure in heaven: Matt, 19:21, "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven";

I Tim. 32:3, "A bishop then must be blameless . . . not greedy of filthy lucre"; I Cor. 10:33, "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved"; I Pet. 5:2, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind"; I John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him". Innumerable texts might be quoted; and not detached texts alone, not the advice only of one apostle to another but the whole teaching of the New Testament, of the religion whose founder was born in a manger, and whose first teachers went from one city to another on foot, provided with neither gold nor silver, nor brass in their purses, nor scrip for their journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves, for the workman was worthy of his meat; and who were told when they set out on their journeys "freely ye have received, freely give".

Milton is particularly vehement in his denunciation of ritualism. Ceremonies, he feels, placing, as they do, emphasis on material display, make the average

person lose sight of the real meaning of Christ's teaching, turning his eyes to what should be extraneous to real worship and making him feel it essential: "Sad it is to think how that doctrine of the gospel, ... should, through the grossness and blindness of her professors, and the fraud of deceivable traditions, drag so downwards, as to backslide one way into the Jewish beggary of old cast rudiments, and stumble forward another way into the new-vomited paganism of sensual idolatry, attributing purity or impurity to things indifferent, that they might bring the inward acts of the spirit to the outward and customary eye-service of the body, as if they could make God earthly and fleshly because they could not make themsleves heavenly and spiritual; they began to draw down all the divine intercourse betwixt God and the soul, yea, the very shape of God himself, into an exterior and bodily form, urgently pretending a necessity and obligement of joining the body in a formal reverence and worship circumscribed; they hallowed it, they fumed it, they sprinkled it, they bedecked it, not in robes of pure innocency, but of pure linen, with other deformed and fantastic dresses, in palls and mitres, gold, and gewgaws fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe, or the

flamins vestry . . . ." (Reformation in England, p.364).

Again,Milton has very firm Scriptural support for his position; one of the most striking features about the teachings of Christ is its simplicity; and it may well be argued that he who taught by the sea-side, on the mountains with his congregation gathered under the open sky, and spoke in parables for simplicity's sake, could not have intended his followers to load their church services with formalities and costly accessories. It may be said in return of course that the use of ritual is partly based on the old ceremonial law, but this Milton will not consider for a moment: "The whole ceremonial law . . . . comprehends nothing but the propitiatory office of Christ's priesthood, which being in substance accomplished, both law and priesthood fades away of itself, and passes into air, like a transitory vision." For this statement the epistles of Paul give him firm support: Gal, 4:9, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"; 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made

us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"; Eph. 2:15, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity,even the law of commandments contained in ordinances"; Col. 2:14, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

Episcopacy versus Presbyterianism

Side by side with his denunciation of the corruption of the prelates and of their desire to accumulate power to themselves, there developed for Milton a natural reaction against the government itself of the church. A part of this tendency of the bishops to add to their own power, he considers their desire of retaining to themselves the sole right of ordination: "First therefore, if those that overaffect antiquity will follow the square thereof, their bishops must be elected by the hands of the whole church. . . . Let no man cavil, but take the church of God as meaning the whole consistence of orders and members, as St. Paul's epistles express. . . . ." also, "He that, enabled with gifts from God, and the lawful and primitive choice of the church assembled in

convenient number, faithfully from that time forward feeds his parochial flock, has his co-equal and compresbyterial power to ordain ministers and deacons by public prayer, and vote of Christ's congregation in like sort as he himself was ordained, and is a true apostlic bishop." (pp.345,373, Reformation in England)

This, of course, is the Presbyterian position exactly: their church is governed by the people themselves and the officials are appointed by the whole body of the presbytery. However, to consider this question of ordination in the light of scriptural authority: of the three cases in the New Testament, where the imposition of hands is definitely spoken of as accomparing ordination, two instances show the hands laid on by the apostle or apostles with no mention of the presbytery (Acts 6:6 and II Tim. 1:6), and other instances speak of the ordination having taken place "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery". With so little evidence it is hard to conclude anything definitely, but it seems as if the position of the apostles in ordination was slightly superior in importance to that of the presbytery. Add to this, the fact that Timothy and Titus who, as

delegates of an absent apostle, seemed to have higher positions than an ordinary presbyter, were given power of ordination (I Tim. 3:10; 5:22; II Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:5) and yet no mention is made of the presbytery being consulted or having a voice in the matter. The actual imposition of hands Milton considers of comparatively little importance. This stand of course is consistent with his position, for the bishops of the Church of England claimed to hold their office by direct descent from the apostles by the laying on of hands from one generation to another. To discredit the importance of the actual imposition of hands, therefore, was to take away one of the chief supports of the prelates' claim; and this is what Milton attempts to do: "As for ordination, what is it but the laying on of hands, an outward sign or symbol of admission. It creates nothing, it confers nothing; it is the inward calling of God that makes a minister, and his own painful study and diligence that manures and improves his ministerial gifts. In the primitive times, many, before ever they had received ordination from the apostles, had done the church noble service; as Apollos and others. It is but an orderly form of receiving a man already fitted, and committing to

him a particular charge; the employment of preaching is as holy and far more excellent; the care also and judgment to be used in the winning of souls, which is an ability above that which is required for ordination." (Animadversions, p. 78).

Not only does Milton insist that the bishops have no power in ordination superior to that of the presbytery, but he also insists that there should be no difference in the position of a bishop and a presbyter. They are, he argues, two different names for the same office: "We grant them bishops, we grant them worthy men, we grant them placed in several churches by the apostles, we grant that Irenaeus and Tertullian affirm this; but that they were placed in a superior order above the presbytery, show from all these words why we should grant. It is not enough to say the apostle left this man bishop in Rome, and that other in Ephesus; but to show when they altered their own decree set down by St. Paul, and made all the presbyters underlings to one bishop." "I do not know, it being undeniable that there are but two ecclesiastical orders, bishops and deacons, mentioned in the gospel, how it can be less than impiety to make a demur at that, which is there so perspicuous,

confronting and paralleling the sacred verity of St. Paul, with the offals and sweepings of antiquity . . . nor caring how slightly they put off the verdict of holy text unsalved, that says plainly there be two orders, so they maintain the reputation of their imaginary doctor the proclaims three... . . ." (Of Prelatical Episcopacy, pp. 432, 436).

Here Milton can get firm support for his arguments from the word of the Bible. It is true that Bishops and presbyters are both spoken of in the Bible, but there is a quantity of evidence to show that the word 'bishop' was used to denote the same office as the word 'presbyter'. In the first epistle to Titus, chap. 1, verses 5 - 7, Paul after advising Titus to ordain presbyters in every city goes on to say "For a bishop must be blameless", using the word bishop to apply to the person whom he had just before called a presbyter. And in Ph. 1:1, I Tim. 3:1-13, bishops and deacons are mentioned side by side with no refer- to presbyters, although if presbyters were to be considered as different from bishops the context would require some mention of them. Also in Acts 20:17, 28, the men who are described in ver. 17 as the "elders" of the church are addressed in ver. 28

as the overseers."

Having argued that 'bishops' and 'presbyters' are only two names for the one office, and that the actual imposition of hands at ordination is of relatively little importance, Milton has cleared the way for his argument that the presbyterian form of government is the one intended in the Bible: "so little is it that I fear lest any crookedness, any wrinkle or spot should be found in presbyterian government, that. . . . .I dare assure myself that every true protestant will admire the integrity, the uprightness, the divine and gracious purposes thereof, and even for the reason of it so coherent with the doctrine of the gospel, beside the evidence of command in Scripture, will confess it to be the only true church government." (p. 490 Reason of Church Government).

On this question, however, one can argue with him on very good Scriptural grounds. For his stand, he has to discount largely the position and work of the Apostles, who organized and directed the work of the presbyters, in somewhat the position of the bishops of the episcopal church. Timothy and Titus, delegates of an absent apostle, had, as we have seen, power of

ordination of presbyters and deacons. Again James, the Lord's brother, seems to have had a position over that of the others: Acts 12:17, "Go shew these things unto James and to the brethren"; Acts 15:13-19, James seems to have been presiding over the council of "men and brethren"; Acts 21:18, "And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present"; this seems to suggest that James was in charge of the church at Jerusalem. Also, although in I Tim. 4:14 the presbytery are spoken of as having laid hands on the one ordained, nevertheless this ordination could take and be effective by the imposition of the hands of the apsotles alone: Acts 6:6, "Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them", II Tim. 1:6, "stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands".*

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* It should be remarked that Milton, being faced with the above text by Bishop Hall, found a very satisfactory answer: "But if we shall, as logic . . . . instructs us, expound the latter place by the former cited (I Tim. 4:14), and understand "by the imposition of my hands", that is, as mine chiefly as an apostle, with the joint authority and assistance of the presbytery, there is nothing more ordinary or kindly in speech than such a phrase as expresses only the chief in any action and understands the rest. So that the imposition of St. Paul's hands, without more expression in this place, cannot exclude the joint act of the presbytery affirmed by the former text." (Animadversions, p. 74).

But on the other hand, I Tim. 4:14 does prove definitely that the presbytery were not excluded from the ordination; and this passage is supported by such others as: Acts 6:5, "the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen"; 14:23, "when they had ordained them elders in every church"; 15:22, "then pleased it the apostled and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas". (p. 454, C.D. VI). So, we see that if the church of the apostles cannot be called the prototype of the Presbyterian Church, neither is it the prototype of the Church of England. Certainly there is no evidence that there was in the early church any fixed and rigid rank of orders ranging from deacon to bishop corresponding to that which is found in the episcopal church. The apostles were, rather, travelling evangelists, doing missionary work in the place where they felt it was most needed, regardless of such restrictions as episcopal territories. Indeed it is not at all probable that these early teachers of the gospel would have laid the ground of any fixed system of church government, expecting as they did, that Christ would very

soon return to earth, bringing with the day of judgment, the end of the world.

Church and State

The next step in Milton's campaign to restore freedom in the church was to advocate complete separation of church and state: "For when the church without temporal support is able to do her great works upon the unforced obedience of men, it argues a divinity about her. But when she thinks to credit and better her spiritual efficacy, and to win herself respect and dread by strutting in the false visard of worldly authority, it is evident that God is not there, but that her apostolic virtue is departed from her, and hath left her key cold. . . ." (Reason of Church Government, p. 489).

Prelatical jurisdiction, he argues, opposes "the reason and end of the gospel and of state" and he insists that "jurisdictive power in the church there ought to be none at all". The archdeaconal courts, imposing penalties and fines, and The Star Chamber seemed to him entirely out of harmony with the teachings of the gospel. Authority belongs to the state over the outward man only, his person and

property. "Thus then the civil magistrate looking only upon the outward man, ... if he find in his complexion, skin, or outward temperature the signs and marks, or in his doings the effects of injustice, rapine, lust, cruelty, or the like, sometimes he shuts us as in frenetick or infectious diseases, or confines within doors, as in every sickly estate." (p. 491, Reason of Church Government). The authority of the church is over the inward man alone, and her weapons are not terror but shame: "God . . . . hath committed this other office of preserving in healthful constitution the inner man, which may be termed the spirit of the soul, to his spiritual deputy, the minister of each congregation; who being best acquainted with his own flock, hath best reason to know all the secretest diseases likely to be there." (p. 492, Reason of Church Government). This deputy of God, assisted often by a "great number of grave and faithful brethren", may instruct, admonish, reprove, entreat, exhort, adjure, and finally, all this failing: "in the name of God and of the church they dissolve their fellowship with him, and holding forth the dreadful sponge of excommunication, pronounce him wiped out of the list of God's inheritance, and in the custody

of Satan till he repent. Which horrid sentence, though it touch neither life nor limb, ... it scorches the inmost soul." But, "if repentance sent from Heaven meet this lost wanderer, and draw him out of that steep journey wherein he was hasting towards destruction, to come and reconcile to the church, if he bring with him his bill of health, and is now clear of infection, and of no danger to the other sheep; then with incredible expressions of joy all his brethren receive him, and set before him those prefumed banquets of Christian consolation." (Reason of Church Government, pp. 498-9).

Regarding this question of ecclesiastical jurisdictionit is worth remarking that Milton follows the Bible almost to the letter, as we shall see by a consideration of the following texts. The ministers of the church are to instruct: Col. 4:3,4, "that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make manifest, as I ought to speak." They are to admonish, reprove, entreat, exhort: II Tim. 4:2, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." I Tim. 5:20, "Them that sin rebuke

before all, that others may fear." And finally, they may use the sentence of excommunication: Matt. 18:17, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he shall neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." I Cor. 5:4,5, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." I Cor. 16:22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." II Thess, 3:14, 15, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." ✱

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✱ It is worthy of note that in this question of excommunication, either in an attempt to emphasize the purely ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the church, or in his desire to keep strictly to the word of the Bible, Milton is here inconsistent with one of his most firm convictions. His argument that the excommunicated one should be allowed back only when he is clear of infection and of "no danger to the other sheep" is quite out of harmony with his conviction expressed in the Areopagitica that every man should be allowed to see good and evil and judge for himself; "to scout into the regions of sin and falsity;" to read all "manner of tractates", to hear "all manner

The evidence, on the other hand, for separating or not separating church and state is not very clear in the Bible. It is true that the argument in favour of separation cannot be disputed on Biblical grounds, for Christ and his apostles never concerned themselves in the least with civil authority either to resist it or to get protection from it; their church was, as Milton would have had his ideal church, interested purely in the spiritual welfare of man. Yet it is questionable whether Milton gets complete support from the Bible for church and state separation. For St. Paul in the thirteenth epistle to the Romans adresses the church at Rome to submit to the higher powers: Rom. 13:1, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Again, in the first epistle of Peter, directed to the churches in Asia Minor we find this advice (I Pet. 2:13, 14.) "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man

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of reason." (Areopagitica p. 68 v. 2) And it cannot be argued that after the writing of the Reason of Church Government and before the Areopagitica, Milton had changed his opinion, for he still insists as late as in the Christian Doctrine upon the Church's right to excommunication: "The administration of Dicipline consists, . . . lastly, in rejecting them from the church: not however, for their destruction, but rather for their preservation, if so they may be induced to repent." (p.472-3 C.D.,v. 1)

for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." But, nevertheless, in the Acts of the Apostles Peter is recorded as setting forth distinctly the principle, that if it came to an issue, the dictates of God were to be observed and acted upon rather than the commands of men: Acts 5:28,29, "Did we not straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name? . . . . Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." However, it is a question which it is difficult to discuss on Biblical grounds, with so little evidence one way or the other; but it seems hardly probable that there would have been any definite connection between church and state in those early days when the church was so newly organized, so hetrogeneous, and so widely dispersed as was that of the apostles.

Milton's campaign for freedom from church tyranny did not end with the conclusion of the series of anti-episcopal tracts but continued throughout his life. Just as his passionate digression in Lycidas had foreshadowed his deliberate protest against the

corruption of the clergy, so his later work carries on the struggle for emancipation from church tyranny. In his Eikonoklastes of 1649 he returns to his argument that the episcopal system cannot be grounded on Scripture: "As for histories to prove bishops, the Bible. . . .must be our only history. Which informs us that the apostles were not properly bishops; next, that bishops were not successors of apostles, in the function of apostleship. And that if they were apostles they could not be precisely bishops; if bishops they could not be apostles; this being universal, extraordinary, and immediate from God; that being an ordinary, fixed, particular charge, the continual inspection over a certain flock." (p. 436 Eikonoklastes)

And later in his "Second Defence of the People of England" we see him appealing to Cromwell to bring about complete separation of church and state: "Then, if you leave the church to its own government, and relieve yourself and the other public functionaries from a charge so onerous, and so incompatible with your functions; and will no longer suffer two powers, so different as the civil and ecclesiastical, ... by their mutual and delusive aids in appearance to strengthen, but in reality to weaken and finally to

subvert each other; if you shall remove all power of persecution out of the church . . . . you will then effectually have cast those money-changers out of the temple, who did not merely truckle with doves but with the Dove itself, with the Spirit of the Most High." (The Second Defence of the People of England, p. 293)

His indignation at the greed of the clergy culminated in 1659 in a tract levelled directly at this species of church corruption; The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church. In this work, he sets out to prove that under the gospel, ministers can no longer claim the tithes of the Levites, but only what the congregation of the church freely give them. "For although hire to the labourer be of moral and perpetual right, yet that special kind of hire, the tenth, can be of no right or necessity, but to that special labour for which God ordained it. That special labour was the Levitical and ceremonial service of the tabernacle Numb. 18:21, 31, which is now abolished; the right therefore of that special hire must needs be withal abolished; as being also ceremonial." (p. 7) He feels convinced that if the clergy had to depend upon the support of their flock, and could not accumulate to themselves great stores of wealth for

their services, that the mercenary clergy would be weeded out, and the church thus purified would be served by those who had a real message to deliver and were inspired by a love of God and of his word. Looking back to the apostolic times, he inclines towards a lay ministry, in which the preachers have other means of subsistence besides the payment for the teaching and spreading of the word of God, which should, if sincere, be gratuitous: "But our ministers think scorn to use a trade, and count it the reproach of this age, that tradesmen preach the gospel. It were to be wished they were all tradesmen; they would not then so many of them, for want of another trade, make a trade of their preaching; and yet they clamour that tradesmen preach; and yet they preach while they themsleves are the worst tradesmen of all." (p. 27) And speaking of the anticipated claim of the clergy that their training has been extensive, he goes on: "But they will say, we had betaken us to some other trade or profession, had we not expected to find a better livelihood by the ministry. This is that which I looked for, to discover them openly neither true lovers of learning, and so very seldom guilty of it, nor true ministers of the gospel." (p. 36) And

again, we see him emphasizing the dignity of the lay-member, insisting upon his right to a place in the government of the church and in the spreading of God's word: "Of which hireling crew, together with all the mischiefs, dissensions, troubles, wars merely of their kindling, Christendom might soon rid herself and be happy, if Christians would but know their own dignity, their liberty, their adoption, and let it not be wondered if I say their spiritual priesthood, whereby they have all equally access to any ministerial function, whenever called by their own abilities, and the church, though they never came near commencement or university." (p. 40)

"The Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes" written in the same year, developes fully his earlier conviction that the kingdom of Christ is purely spiritual and that no power has a right to interfere in matters of religion. The work constitutes a plea for universal toleration (Roman Catholics only excepted) in very much the spirit of the Areopagitica: "Seeing then that in matters of religion, as hath been proved, none can judge or determine here on earth, no, not church governors themselves, against the consciences of other believers, my inference is, or

rather not mine but our Saviour's own, that in those matters they neither can command nor use constraint, lest they run rashly on a pernicious consequence, forewarned in that parable Matt. 13:29-31, "Lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest:'. . . But some will object, that this overthrows all church dicipline, all censure of errors, if no man can determine. My answer is, that what they hear is plain scripture, which forbids not church sentence or determining, but as it ends in violence upon the conscience unconvinced." (pp. 525-6) If the church governors themselves may not judge or determine in matters of religion against the conscience of believers then certainly the magistrate has no right to do so: "Ill was our condition changed from legal to evangelical, and small advantage gotten by the gospel, if for the spirit of adoption to freedom promised us, we receive again the spirit of bondage to fear; if our fear, which was then servile towards God only, must now be servile in religion towards men: strange also and preposterous fear, if when and wherein it hath attained by the redemption of our Saviour to be filial only towards God, it must now be servile towards the magis-

trate: (p. 541) This argument that no power may interfere in matters of religion may be directly supported, of course, by the words of Peter referred to above: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Before going on to consider his later attitude toward the church, it may be well to pause for a moment and see what light the discussion to this point has thrown on Milton's attitude toward the Bible. There is very little that we can say except that he can support his positive arguments with very direct Biblical evidence; but that, for consistency, he has to discount such arguments as the importance of the laying on of hands; the position and work of the apostles, and ignore, or make little of, the evidence that some apostles seemed to have more important positions and more power than the others. One fact stands out clearly, that Milton will take from the Bible the interpretation that gives most freedom to the individual man, and which emphasizes the worth and the rights of every human being, even the most humble.

Milton's Later Attitude Towards the Church

In the Christian Doctrine, Milton again discusses

the question of church and church government, and here he re-states most of the convictions he has already expressed. Bishop and presbyter, he again insists, are different names for the same office: "The ordinary ministers of a particular church are presbyters and deacons. Presbyters are otherwise called bishops." (V. I.,, p. 453) He disputes again, the Anglican claim to succession, by the imposition of hands, in direct descent from the apostles: "The imposition of hands, however, was not confined to the election of presbyters, but was practiced even towards veteran ministers, in the way of solemn benediction, on their engaging in any work of importance. . . . . The right of succession is nugatory, and of no force." (C. D. P. 455). As before, he insists (p. 454) that the body of the church have a share in the choice of ministers; he repeats (p. 472-3) his opinions on church dicipline in words very similar to those in the Reason of Church Government; and gives us again his distinction between the function of ecclesiastical and civil power: "The civil power has dominion only over the body and external faculties of man; the ecclesiastical is exercised exclusively on the faculties of the mind, which acknowledge no other juris-

diction." (p. 474)

However when we consider Milton's later attitude toward the church a little more closely we see that this correspondence with his early attitude is not so close as it seems at first sight; in this later work he is giving in outline the organization of the church more for the benefit of other people than for himself. He had come to feel less and less need of a church as he grew older, until finally there was little that the church could do for himself or his family which he did not feel he could do as well himself in his own home.

In accordance with the Presbyterians he defines the sacraments of the church as the external seals of the covenant of grace, and agrees with them that they are two in number, namely: the Lord's Supper and Baptism. The presbyterian church, however, insisted that neither of these sacraments might "be dispensed by any but a minister of the word, lawfully ordained," (Westminster Confessions, Chap. 27); and here Milton departs entirely from the orthodox position. Both sacraments, he maintains, may be presided over by the head of the family: "We nowhere read in scripture of the Lord's Supper being distrib-

uted to the first Christians by an appointed minister; we are only told that they partook of it in common, and that frequently and in private houses. . . . . I know no reason therefore why ministers refuse to permit the celebration of the Lord's Supper except where they themselves are allowed to administer it; for if it be alleged that Christ gave the bread and wine to his disciples, it may be replied first, that we nowhere read of his giving them to each individually, and secondly, that he was then acting in the character, not of a minister, but of the founder of a new institution. . . . .it is not conceivable that there should be any such essential distinction between the passover and the Lord's Supper, that whereas under the law. . . . .there was no ordinance restricting the celebration of the passover to the members of that body (the Levites), under the gospel . . . . .the dispensing of the elements,. . . . . should be considered as an unfit office for any but the ministers of the church; so that the master of a family, or any one appointed by him, is not at liberty to celebrate the Lord's Supper from house to house, as was done in the dispensation of the passover." (C. D. 411, v.1) Milton emphasizes the fact

that the Lord's Supper sometimes taken in a private house, as apparently it was: Acts 20:7 "and upon the first day of the week, the apostles came together to break bread . . . . . and there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together." Acts 2:46, "And breaking bread from house to house." But we also have evidence which Milton overlooks, that the Lord's Supper was also taken in the church and that the believers gathered together at the church for that purpose: I Cor. 11:20, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper: For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper. . . . .What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or dispise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?" Milton's other point, that the bread of sacrament need not be given by an ordained minister seems to have very good scriptural grounding. Acts 2:44,46, "And all that believed were together, ...and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house."

For baptism also, Milton considered the services of a minister unnecessary, even though it was, he admitted, the outward sign by which a believer sealed

his covenant with God and the church: "If therefore it be competent to any believer whatever to preach the gospel, provided he be furnished with the requisite gifts, it is also competent to him to administer the rite of baptism; inasmuch as the latter office is inferior to the former. . . . .Hence Ananias who was only a disciple baptized Paul." (C.D. vi., p425) However, baptizing, in the New Testament, seems to h have been one of the duties of the apostles,and we seldom hear of a private man performing the rite. Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them." Acts 10:48, "And he (Peter) commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In the Bible, however, most of the instances of baptism are recorded in the passive voice by the words: "They were baptized" or "she" or "he" was baptized", and this gives us no definite evidence with which to settle the question.

Neither are the services of a minister necessary at marriages or funerals: "Offices which hirelings are wont to assume to themselves exclusively, without even the feeble semblence of prescription derived from the Levitical law." (C.D.V.I.P. 436) The same thought is echoed in "The Likeliest Means to Remove

Hirelings:" "Burials and marriages are so little to be any part of their gain, that they who consider well may find them to be no part of their function. At burials their attendance they allege on the corpse; all the guests do as much unhired. . . ..As for Marriages, that ministers should meddle with them, as not sanctified or legitimate without their celebration, I find no ground in scripture either of precept or of example." (p. 21) On these points there is no question of dispute, for we hear no where in the Bible of the necessity of a minister for the celebration of marriage, or for attendance at funerals.

As we said, in the latter years of Milton's life, there was little that the church could do for him that he could not do as well for himself; we have now dispensed with the services of a minister at the sacraments and at marriages or funerals. What have we left? Very little but the attendance at church, with which is connected the religious observance of the Sabbath, worship, and the hearing of God's word through a minister of the gospel.

On the question of the observance of the Sabbath Milton seems to have opinions very different in his later years from those of his youth. The following

passage is an extract from the Reformation in England, written in 1641: "but this I am sure, they took the ready way to despoil us both of manhood and grace at once, and that in the shamefullest and ungodliest manner, upon that day which God's law, and even our own reason hath consecrated, that we might have one day at least of seven set apart wherein to examine and increase our knowledge of God. . . " (p. 401) But when he wrote his Christian Doctrine in the latter sixteen fifties, he was no longer so convinced that the Sabbath was a day "which God's law and even our own reason has consecrated," but would write in this manner: "Since then the Sabbath was originally an ordinance of the Mosaic law, imposed on the Israelites alone, and that for the express purpose of distinguishing them from other nations, it follows that, if. . . those who live under the gospel are emancipated from the ordinances of the law in general, least of all can they be considered as bound by that of the Sabbath, the distinction being abolished which was the special cause of its institution." (C.D. V.II,P. 68)

Milton supports his argument that the law of the Sabbath has been repealed, by this passage from the epistles to the Romans: 14:5, "one man esteemeth one

day above another; another esteemeth every day alike: let every man be fully persuaded in his mind." and Col. 2:16, 17, "let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days." He continues: "It is urged. . . . .that God rested on the seventh day. This true; and with reason, inasmuch as he had finished a great work, the creation of heaven and earth; if then we are bound to imitate him in his rest, without any command to that effect, (and none has yet been produced,) we are equally bound to imitate his work. . . . .for rest implies previous labour." (C.D. v.2., p. 69) "It ought also to be shewn what essential principle of morality is involved in the number seven; and why, when released from the obligation of the Sabbath, we should still be bound to respect a particular number possessing no inherent virtue or efficacy. . . ..if, as it is contended, it is applicable to us inasmuch as we have been brought out of the slavery of a spiritual Egypt, the Sabbath ought to be such as the deliverance, spiritual and evangelical, not bodily and legal; above all, it ought to be voluntary, not a constrained observance, lest we should be merely substituting one Egyptian bondage

for another; for the spirit cannot be forced." (C.D. v.2,. p. 71)

His general conclusion on the matter of the Sabbath day, is that the only Sabbath to be observed is that set apart by the church's authority for the voluntary assembling of its members; and it is to be remembered that this sabbath should be observed only in compliance with the church and not "in obedience to the edicts of the magistrate." This would mean, of course, that if the Sabbath day were to be observed at the same time throughout the nation there would have to be a national church; otherwise different churches might very easily be keeping the Sabbath on different days. Milton could not have intended this, however, for after he had written his Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes in 1659, advocating almost universal toleration in matters of religion, he still maintained in the The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings, written later in the same year that there was no particular efficacy in the seventh day, calling it a "convenient recourse of worship in fit season, whether seventh of other number," (p.18)

The Sabbath, he has said, should be a day set apart

by the church of "its own authority, for the voluntary assembly of its members." But would Milton, as a member, be one of those who would voluntarily assemble? His position that church could set apart a certain day for worship from its members, seems inconsistent with his previous statement that the 'Spirit cannot be forced,' unless we understand him to mean that the church member should not observe it himself unless he was really in the spirit to do so. And in order that we should understand him so, Milton has been careful to insert the word "voluntary" when speaking of the assembling.

Regarding the question of worship we have seen Milton from the beginning attempting to bring about a simplicity of form such as he considered to have existed in the early church of the apostles; holding practically the position that the spiritual value of worship varies in strength according to its simplicity: "Neither can any true Christian find a reason why liturgy should be at all admitted, a prescription not imposed or practiced by those first founders of the church, who alone had most authority; without whose precept or example, how constantly the priest puts on his gown and surplice, so constantly doth his prayer

put on a servile yoke of liturgy. This is evident, that they 'who use no set form of prayer,' have words from their affections; while others are to seek affections fit and proportionable to a certain dose of prepared words." (Eikonoklastes p. 430) The same desire for simplicity, spontaneity, in worship is shown in the Christian Doctrine: "It is not necessary that our prayer should be always audible; the silent supplication of the mind, whispers, even groans and inarticulate exclammations in private prayer, are available. . . . . No particular posture of the body in prayer was enjoined even under the law. . . . . with regard to the place of prayer, all are equally suitable. . . Neither is there any time at which prayer may not be properly offered." (pp. 33-36 C.D. v.2) and again in the Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes written in 1659. " It will be sufficient in this place to say no more of Christian liberty, than that it sets us free not only from the bondage of those ceremonies, but also from the forcible imposition of those circumstances, place and time, in the worship of God." (p. 539 v.2)

The simplicity of Milton's ideal form of worship is vividly portrayed in Paradise Lost. Adam and Eve

throughout worship God without set time or place, standing or kneeling, with no fixed form, or ceremony of any sort.

> . . . . . .other rites
> Observing none, but adoration pure
> Which God likes best. . . . . .
> (Bk. 4. 736 --)
> .
> . . . . . .and began
> Their orisons, each morning duly paid
> In various style; . . . . . .
> (Bk. 5. 144 --)

If then worship is subject to neither time nor place, and should be entirely spontaneous, there is not much reason left for reserving Sunday for worship or for attending church on certain set days, unless it be to hear the word of God taught and explained. And this, instruction regarding the Bible, Milton felt should not need to continue throughout one's whole life: "First, I offer it to the reason of any man, whether he think the knowledge of Christian religion harder than any other art or science to attain. I suppose he will grant that it is far easier, both of itself, and in regard of God's assisting Spirit, not particularly promised us to the attainment of any other knowledge, but of this only: since it was preached as well to the shepherds of Bethlehem by angels, as to the Eastern wise men by that star: and our Saviour

declares himself anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, Luke 4:18; then surely to their capacity. They who after him first taught it, were otherwise unlearned men: . . . . . Therefore are the scriptures translated into every vulgar tongue, as being held in main matters of belief and salvation, plain and easy to the poorest. Hence we may conclude, if men be not all their lifetime under a teacher to learn logic, natural philosophy, ethics, or mathematics, which are more difficult, that certainly it is not necessary to the attainment of Christian knowledge, that men should sit all their lives at the feet of a pulpited divine." (Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings. p. 23-4)

Thus we see that although Milton was as interested as ever in church organization, and that although he appreciated the need of society for church, he himself had very little need of church attendance or of the services of a minister; as we said, there was little the church or minister could do for him that he could not do for himself, in his later years.

III

DIVORCE

Scarcely a year after the conclusion of the anti-episcopal controversy, Milton began a fresh series of tracts in the cause of liberty, this time liberty from the laws regarding marriage and divorce. In 1643 had come his unfortunate marriage to Mary Powell, eldest daughter of a Royalist family, and in August of the same year he published his first tract on divorce, "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce." This he supported, in 1644, by a translation of Martin Bucer's work on the same subject, and concluded the series by "Tetrachordon" and "Colasterion" in 1645. The argument throughout is an attempt to reconcile Christ's prohibition of divorce in the New Testament with its allowances in the Old. Milton's own position on the subject is this: "That indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering, and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace; is a greater reason of divorce than natural frigidity, especially if there be no children, and that there be mutual consent." (Doctrine and Dicipline of Divorce p. 185). A broad enough position, surely; but how is he going to support it

from scripture in view of such passages as Matt. 5:32, "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." and Luke 16:18 "Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery."

This is the progress of his argument, in brief: first, he proves his own position by the law of Moses: Deut. 24:1; then as a further support he brings evidence to prove that under both the law and the gospel, other causes besides adultery were allowed as grounds for divorce: thirdly, divorce was allowed under the Mosaic law: God could never have given a law which was not just and good, if it was so once it is now. Neither can the permission be considered as a dispensation, given because of the difficulty of enforcing a rigid law against divorce; for to allow such a dispensation by law would be to lead the people blindfold into sin. Lastly, Christ did not come to abrogate the laws, and so he could not have intended his prohibition to annul the former permission but rather to check prevalent abuses of it.

The Position Proved by the Law of Moses

Deut. 24:1, "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house." This permission, we see, is not very far removed from Milton's own position; a little difficulty might arise, however, from the words "some uncleanness," and this difficulty Milton anticipates and removes at the outset: "The cause of divorce mentioned in the law is translated 'some uncleanness', but in the Hebrew it sounds 'nakedness of aught, or any real nakedness': which by all the learned interpreters is referred to the mind as well as to the body. And what greater nakedness or unfitness of mind than that which hinders ever the solace and peaceful society of the married couple? And what hinders that more than the unfitness and defectiveness of an unconjugal mind? The cause therefore of divorce expressed in the position cannot but agree with that described in the best and equallest sense of Moses's law." (p. 186 Doctrine and Discipline)

Other Causes Besides Adultery Allowed under the Law and the Gospel

The institution itself of marriage, as described in Genesis, supports his belief, Milton argues, that God would allow other reasons other than adultery as grounds for divorce; for it is when the end of marriage is defeated that its dissolution becomes defendable, and the words of the institution emphasize, as the end of marriage, the social relation rather than the physical: "And what his chief end was of creating woman to be joined with man, his own instituting words declare, and are infallible to inform us what is marriage, and what is no marriage; unless we can think them set there to no purpose: "It is not good," saith he, "that man should be alone. I will make a help meet for him." From which words, so plain, less cannot be concluded, nor is by any learned interpreter, than that in God's intention a meet and happy conversation is the chiefest and the noblest end of marriage: for we find here no expression so necessarily implying carnal knowledge, as this prevention of loneliness to the mind and spirit of man (D. and D. of D. p. 187,)

To continue in an unhappy marriage, therefore,

is directly against the purpose for which marriage was ordained, and it is most unreasonable "that any law or covenant, how solemn or strait power, either between God and man, or man and man, though of God's joining, should bind against a prime and principal scope of its own institution, and of both or either party covenanting; (p. 187). True, it is a covenant, as Milton says, "either between God and man, or man and man," but this covenant is not best kept by a forced exaction to wrong interpretations of the Bible, an interpretation that goes contrary to the whole spirit of God's teaching and to his plainly written law of the Old Testament: ". . . it is not the outward continuing of marriage that keeps whole that covenant, but whatsoever does most according to peace and love, whether in marriage or in divorce, he it is that breaks marriage least; it being so often written, that "Love only is the fulfilling of every commandment." (D. and D. of D. p. 197.) This argument that the continuation of an unhappy marriage is directly against the purpose of its institution is of course well supported on the grounds of human reason; but before we agree that therefore God would allow reasons other than adultery for the dissolution of

marriage we must see if Milton can bring any evidence from the Bible to prove that this was actually the case. He insists that he can, and this he proceeds to do: "This therefore shall be the task and period of this discourse to prove, first, that other reasons of divorce, besides adultery, were by the law of Moses, ...allowed." (p. 183, Doctrine and Discipline). As Milton argues, it would be unreasonable to suppose that divorce would be granted for adultery alone, when that sin was already provided for in Lev. 20:10, "the adulterer andthe adulteress shall surely be put to death." With one law that punished adultery by death there should be no need of another that would allow divorce for adultery. Therefore we must look for some other cause than adultery expressed in the Mosaic Law, and as we have seen, Milton explains that the difficulty is caused by the translation, the words "some uncleanness" meaning properly "nakedness of aught, or any real nakedness."

Even the Jews themselves, Milton argues, under the Old Testament were allowed, indeed commanded, to divorce for other causes than that single one of adultery: "the Jews were commanded to divorce an unbelieving Gentile for two causes: First, because all

other nations, especially the Canaanites, were to them unclean. Secondly, to avoid seducement. That other nations were to the Jews impure, even to the separating of marriage, will appear out of Exod. 34;16, Deut. 7:3, 7 compared with Ezra 9:2 also chap. 10; 10, 11. Neh. 13:30." (p. 199 Doctrine and Discipline.) Among these passages, the chief support is found in Ezra 10:10,11. "Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, ... Now therefore make confession . . . . .and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives." But even this command, emphatic as it is, strictly speaking, is only a command to separate, not definitely a rule applicable to absolute divorce.

Having set forth the argument that the Old Testament allows divorce for an idolatrous match, on the ground that the unbeliever would draw the believer away from the faith, Milton proceeds to argue that for the same reason, divorce should be allowed to unhappy marriage. For such a marriage has the same effect as an idolatrous one: "crushing the very foundation of his inmost nature, ... his whole duty of serving God must needs be blurred and tainted with a sad unpreparedness and dejection of spirit, wherein

God has no delight." (p. 197, Doctrine and Discipline) God would, it follows, prefer that a man should free himself from an unhappy marriage, sooner than have him compelled through this misfortune to lose all his religious faith. Rather a forced parallel perhaps, let us have it in Milton's own words: ". . .for that God prefers the free and cheerful worship of a Christian, before the grievance and exacted observance of an unhappy marriage, ...will be more manifest by drawing a parallel argument from the ground of divorcing an idolatress, which was, lest she should alienate his heart from the true worship of God: and, what difference is there whether she pervert him to superstition by her enticing sorcery, or disenable him in the whole service of God through the disturbance of her unhelpful and unfit society; and so drive him at last, ...to thoughts of atheism? Neither does it lessen the cause of separating, in that the one willingly allures him from the faith, the other perhaps unwillingly drives him; for in the account of God it comes all to one, that the wife loses him a servant." (D. and D. of D.)

Here again we are faced with the problem of deciding whether Milton is basing his argument on the

grounds of human reason or on the grounds of Biblical evidence. If it were to come to a decision between divorce from an unhappy marriage or the loss of one's faith, human reason says at once that God would prefer us to free ourselves from the marriage. But at the same time there is no place in the Bible where we hear that divorce was allowed for an unhappy marriage, on the grounds that the unhappiness would draw the believer away from his faith. Here, there seems to be no question that Milton's argument is based on man's reason alone and not on Biblical evidence.

Even under the gospel, Milton argues, divorce was allowed for differences in faith. I Cor. 7:15, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." Again we have no evidence from which to decide whether these words give a permission to separate only, or whether they allow absolute divorce. It may be argued, that the words of the same apostle in Romans 7:1, suggest that bondage refers to the marriage tie, and that a person "not under bondage" is one freed from such a tie. It is, nevertheless, a question which cannot be definitely settled, although Milton takes it without question as

allowing an absolute divorce.

The words of Christ in the tenth chapter of Mark regarding the Christian's duty to religion are also brought in to support this position: "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, ...or wife, ...for my sake, and the gospel, But he shall receive an hundredfold . . . . . and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark 10:29) "The gospel" Milton writes, "is more plainly on his side, (i. e. St. Paul in II Cor. 6:14), according to three of the evangelists, than the words of the law; for where the case of divorce is handled with such severity, as was fittest to aggravate the fault of unbounded license; yet still in the same chapter, when it comes into question afterwards, whether any civil respect, or natural relation which is dearest, may be our plea to divide, or hinder or but delay our duty to religion, we hear it determined that father, and mother, and wife also, is not only to be hated, but forsaken, if we mean to inherit the great reward there promised." (D. D. of D. p. 200)

The Mosaic Laws in Relation to Divorce

Now, having extended the grounds for divorce to more causes than that one of adultery, Milton sets out to prove that Christ's prohibition does nothing to annul the Mosaic Law, which is of as much force under the gospel as under the law itself. First, then, the laws of Moses, were received from God, and must be just and pure for such is God who gave them -- all his gifts are perfect. But it may be argued, Milton anticipates, that Moses had allowed this as a dispensation seeing that the rigid law of not divorcing would be too hard to enforce; and this he will not consider for a moment. It is impossible to imagine that a just and good God would have incorporated among his laws for his chosen people one that would deliberately permit them to sin, that would make sin lawful: "for how can that be imagined any good to a sinner, whom nothing but rebuke and due correction can save, to hear the determinate oracle of divine law louder than any reproof dispensing and providing for the impunity and convenience of sin; to make that doubtful or rather lawful, which the end of the law was to make most evidently hateful?" It must be then, with

the full permission of God that we avail ourselves such a permission as that given in the twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. "Absurd and monstrous would that dispense be, if any judge of law should give it a man to cut his own throat, or to damn himself. Dispense, therefore, presupposes full pardon, or else it is not a dispense, but a most baneful and bloody snare. And why should God enter covenant with a people to be holy, as "the command is holy, and just and good" Rom. 7:12, and yet suffer an impure and treacherous dispense, to mislead and betray them under the vizard of law to a legitimate practice of uncleanness?" (p. 226, Doctrine and Discipline.)

Besides, Christ's mission was not to make new laws or to abrogate the old, and it is most unlikely that he intended to go against the express permission of the Mosaic Law: "this can be no new command, for the gospel enjoins no new morality, save only the infinite enlargement of charity, which in this respect is called the new commandment by St. John, as being the accomplishment of every command." (p. 252 Doctrine and Discipline) Particularly in Milton's opinion Christ intended not to abrogate this particular law: "And who put it in man's power to exempt,

where Christ speaks in general of not abrogating "the least jot or tittle", and in special not that of divorce, because it follows among those laws which he promised expressly not to abrogate, but to vindicate from abusive traditions? Which is most evidently to be seen in the 16th of Luke, where this caution of not abrogating is inserted immediately, and not otherwise than purposely, when no other point of the law is touched but that of divorce." (p. 241 Doctrine and Discipline). In passing, we may mention that Milton's argument here seems to take one away from the context. It is not so true that no other point is touched upon but that of divorce, as that it is true that no other point is touched upon but that of adultery, and it would seem that if Christ had in mind any particular one of the Mosaic Laws when he spoke, it was one such as Exod.20:14, or Lev. 20:10, dealing with the question of adultery..

Now, having supported his positions with arguments to the effect that all of Moses's Laws are just and good, that not one of them is to be understood as a dispensation, and that Christ's intention was not to interfere with the laws, Milton is free to turn to the words of Christ and show how they should be inter-

preted; and he insists that whoever takes them in their most rigid meaning, utterly misses the message of Christ, who came to bring freedom to men, brotherly love, and charity: "What was ever in all appearance less made for man, and more for God alone, than the Sabbath? Yet when the good of man comes into the scales we hear that voice of infinite goodness and benignity, that 'sabbath was made for man, not man for sabbath'. What thing ever was made for man alone, and less for God, than marriage? And shall we load it with a cruel and senseless bondage, utterly against boththe good of man, and the glory of God?" (p. 215, Doctrine and Discipline.) The man who understnads the message and spirit of Christ, he argues, will never interpret his prohibition to believe that he would give a commandment so utterly against the good of man, and also contrary to the direct permission of God. We must remember that in scripture, when any doubt arises, we must consider the actual words in relation to the occasion that gave rise to them; and by comparing them with other texts: "The occasion, which induced our Saviour to speak of divorce, was either to convince the extravagance of the pharisees in that point, or to give a sharp and vehement answer to a tempting

question. . . . .where they were too remiss, he saw it needful to seem most severe: in one place he censures an unchaste look to be adultery already committed; another time he passes over actual adultery with less reproof than for an unchaste look; . . . . as when we bow things the contrary way, to make them come to their natural straightness." (p. 215, Doctrine and Discipline.)

The words of Christ then are to be understood as follows: "Moses had granted, that only for a natural annoyance, defect, or dislike, whether in body or mind, ...which a man could not force himself to live with, he might give a bill of divorce, thereby forbidding any other cause, whereinamendment or reconciliation might have place. . . . .Christ forbids it, but only in matters that may accord, and those less than fornication. Thus is Moses's law here plainly confirmed, and those causes which he permitted not a jot gainsaid." (p. 253, Doctrine and Discipline)

The True Import of Christ's Words

To take the words of Jesus as an absolute prohibition applying to men in general, Milton considers, is to misinterpret them altogether; and accordingly

he undertakes to show how each separate text may be understood as in harmony with his own position. Some of the passages are rather uncompromising and require elaborate treatment; and this Milton proceeds to give them, even though early in Tetrachordon he has spoken slightingly of "some, who. . . . .will not suffer the clear text of God to do the office of explaining itself." In Tetrachordon he discusses in detail "the four chief places in scripture which treat of marriage; or nullities in marriage." But it is in the New Testament that he has to put forth his most careful arguments and it is only here that we need follow him. Matt. 19: 3, 4, -- , "And the pharisees came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him." "Tempting him --". "The manner of these men coming to our Saviour, not to learn, but to tempt him, may give us to expect, that their answer will be such as is fittest for them; not so much a teaching, as an entangling. No man, though never so well enabled to instruct, but if he discover his willingness and candour made use of to entrap him, will suddenly draw in himself, and. . . . .know his time to utter clouds and riddles. . . . .The Pharisees therefore knowing our Saviour to be a friend of John the Baptist, and no

doubt but having heard much of his sermon on the mount, wherein he spake rigidly against the licence of divorce, they put him this question, both in hope to find in him a contradiction of Moses, and a condemner of Herod; so to insnare him within the compass of the same accusation which had ended his friend; and our Saviour so orders his answer, as that they might perceive Herod and his adulteress, only not named; so lively it concerned them both what he spake. No wonder then if the sentence of our Saviour sounded s stricter than his custom was; which his conscious attempters doubtless apprehended sooner than his other auditors." (pp. 370, ff. Tetrachordon)

The obvious comment here, it seems to me, is that if Christ did not intend to abrogate the Mosaic Laws, and if he saw that the Pharisees intended to find him in a contradiction of Moses, this would have been an excellent time for him to support the laws of Moses and make his position clear; if he had wanted to reprove such people as Herod and his adulteress, he could easily have first given his support of the Mosaic law and then condemned abuses of it. Besides this, if he spake in clouds and riddles so as to entangle the Pharisees, why was it that they apprehended him

sooner than his other auditors, the disciples? Matt. 19:4, 5, "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female? And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?"

"If here. . . . .being tempted, he desire to be the shorter, and the darker in his conference, and omit to cite that from the second of Genesis, which all divines confess is a commentary to what he cites out of the first, the 'making them male and female' what are we to do, but to search the institution ourselves? . . . . .the prohibition of divorce depends not upon this reason here expressed to the pharisees, but upon the plainer and more eminent causes omitted here, and referred to in the institution." (p.375 Tetrachordon) Milton refers here to the lines in Genesis speaking of the companionship of marriage: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him." But if Christ had intended to refer to the higher ends of matrimony, why did he speak as he did? He may have intended the prohibition of divorce to depend upon a reason not expressed, as

Milton argues, but it seems strange that he would not express it, here, the only time when he spoke of the institution of marriage. Milton argues, however, that he is choosing his words to suit the ears of his listeners: "And that our Saviour taught them no better, but uses the most vulgar, most animal and corporal agument to convince them, is first to shew us, that as through their licentious divorces they made no more of marriage, than as if to marry were no more then to be male and female, so he goes no higher in his confutation; deeming them unworthy to be talked with in a higher strain, but to be tied in marriage by the mere material cause thereof, since their own licence testified that nothing matrimonial was in their thought, but to be male and female" (p. 375 Tetrachordon.) And yet when Christ was alone with his disciples afterwards and they questioned him, he failed to express this higher reason on which Milton insists that he meant divorce to depend; and it was then that one would expect him to express it, after the tempting pharisees had gone, to the men who were to be teachers of his word.

"What therefore God hath joined let not man put asunder, --" But here Christian prudence has to consider what God hath joined. Shall we say that God

hath joined error, fraud, unfitness, wrath, contention, perpetual loneliness, perpetual discord; whatever lust, or wine, or witchery, threat or enticement, avarice or ambition hath joined together, faithful and unfaithful, Christian with anti-christian, hate with hate, or love with love; shall we say this is God's joining? . . . for if it be, ...not of God's joining, and his law tells us he joins not unmatchable things, but hates to join them, as an abominable confusion, then the divine law of Moses puts them asunder, his own divine will in the institution puts them asunder, as oft as the reasons be not extant, for which only God ordained their joining." (pp. 376 ff. Tetrachordon.) This elaborate interpretation is very agreeable to one's reason, and it is pleasant to think that by these words Jesus meant only a truly harmonious union; but there is nothing in the record of Matthew to indicate that he meant more than the marriage of ordinary man and wife. The words seem to say that the fact of marriage itself had made them joined by God, and that they were not to be put asunder by man, except for the one cause which Jesus later stipulates.

The words, "for the hardness of your hearts Moses suffered you to put away your wives" constitute a real

difficulty for Milton's position, for they suggest that Jesus did not consider this law of Moses as a real law, but rather as a dispensation; Milton, as we have seen, will not consider this view, for a moment, from his opponents, and neither will he consider it from the mouth of Christ. The phrase, "Moses suffered you", he demonstrates to be no real difficulty, because Jesus and the Pharisees both used the words, although they are quite different words in the Greek, "suffered" and "commanded" interchangeably in the same sense; as we may see in the tenth chapter of Mark in the same connection; where Jesus here uses the words "commanded" and the Pharisees, who particularly wanted to understand it as a law, say "suffered." The qualifying phrase "for the hardness of your hearts", is, however, still a serious obstacle and Milton proceeds to show in what sense he considers Jesus to have used the words.

"Because of the hardness of your hearts, --"

". . . if he (Moses) in his wisdom, and in the midst of his severity, allowed it for hardness of heart, it can be nothing better than arrogance and presumption to take stricter courses against hardness of heart, than God ever set an example; and that under the gos-

pel, which warrants them to no judicial act of compulsion in this matter, much less to be more severe against hardness of extremity, than God thought good to be against hardness of heart. (p. 385) There are, he continues, two ways in which hardness of heart is meant in the gospel. "One, when it is in a good man taken for infirmity, and imperfection, which was in all the apostles, whose weakness only, not utter want of belief, is called hardness of heart." (Mark 16) It is this weakness or imperfection in us, since we have lost original righteousness, that make necessary, laws of any kind. "If, therefore, we abolish divorce as only suffered for hardness of heart, we may as well abolish the whole law of nations, as only suffered for the same cause." (p. 386) The other sense in which hardness of heart is meant is a stubborn determination to do evil. And that God ever made any law purposely for such determination, Milton denies. God only makes a covenant with men of evil character as they chance to be mixed with good men, and pass undiscovered -- never purposely for them. This law of divorce then like all laws is made for the good man to protect him from his own natural infirmities and those of others; such men use the law by right because it is made for

them; bad men however abuse it, and this may be said to be by sufferance. Therefore Jesus could say "Because of the hardness of your hearts", when speaking to the Pharisees who abused the law, and mean only them, not the upright men for whom the law was made and who used it by right.

"Lastly, . . .Christ, speaking to the Pharisees, does not say in general that for hardness of heart he gave this precept, but, 'you he suffered, and to you he gave this precept, and for your hardness of heart'. It cannot be easily thought, that Christ here included all the children of Israel under the person of these tempting Pharisees, but that he conceals wherefore he gave the better sort of them this law, and expresses by saying emphatically, 'To you,' how he gave it to the worser, such as the Pharisees best represented, that is to say, for the hardness of you hearts: as indeed to wicked men and hardened hearts he gives the whole law and the gospel also, to harden them the more." (p. 389).

In this difficult passage practically no single word is allowed to go by unexplained; the phrase "whosoever shall put away his wife" is interpreted at length and we are told that "whosoever" does not re-

fer to one who puts away his wife with consent on both sides or to one who puts away after sober experience and cool debate a wife whom he cannot love as he should love his wife, though he still respect her too well to keep her under a "neglected and unwelcome residence," where to be detained would be "more injurious than to be freely and upon good terms dismissed." Neither does the man put away adulterously who complains of causes rooted in utter unfitness, disconformity, or immutable nature, nor he who puts away an "unquenchable vexation", nor he who does it with the "full sufferage and applause of his conscience", not relying on the written bill of the law. (p. 394) By this explanation he restricts the class of man who divorces adulterously to such men as the Pharisees themselves, supporting his former theory that Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees particularly and not to the upright man. This interpretation harmonizes well with the facts that God through Moses, had allowed divorce, and that Christ did not come in the position of one intending to make any change in the law. But it is more agreeable to one's reason than it is to this particular passage on which Milton is attempting to found it, for Christ sa ys in the most unqualified

expression "Whosoever shall put away. . . . .except it be for fornication, ...committeth adultery."

The analysis and explanation is continued to the end of the passage. Even the words "his wife" are allotted their share of explanation: "This word is not to be idle here, a mere word without a sense, much less a fallacious word signifying contrary to what it pretends; but faithfully signifies a wife, that is, a comfortable help and society, as God instituted; does not signify deceitfully under this name an intolerable adversary, not a helpless, unaffectionate, and sullen mass, whose very company represents the visible and exactest figure of loneliness itself. Such an associate he who puts away, divorces not a wife, but disjoins a nullity which God never joined. . . . ." (p. 394)

The real difficulty comes in the words restricting the grounds of divorce to one cause alone, and that one a cause which Milton considered unimportant in comparison with incompatibility of temperament, which gave a life-long unchangeable need for divorce. His solution for the difficulty is to extend the meaning given by the one word: and he tells us that we are to understand two different classes of causes, one

consisting of varieties of permanent unfitness, which are grounds at all times for divorce, since they make marriage otherwise than it was intended to be by the institution. The other class is filled by temporary accidental causes and these are not allowed as grounds for divorce, since the differences are usually reconcileable. The only one of these temporary causes for which divorce may be given is the one specified. "It will with all due reason therefore be thus better understood, whoso puts away for any accidental and temporary causes, except one of them, which is fornication." (p.394)

This interpretation gives, from Milton's point of view, a very satisfactory answer to the difficulty. The reasons for which one may not seek divorce are few and inconsiderable in comparison to those for which he would have us believe divorce to be permitted by the words of Jesus. But this view of it seems to have practically no ground in Scripture; for if Christ had intended us to believe that for this one cause only from a certain class, and for all causes from another class, one could claim grounds for divorce, he would surely have made his meaning more clear, and not mentioned the one cause alone with no qual-

ification. This condition, given in Matthew, restricted though it is, allows Milton a certain opportunity to enlarge upon it, and to extend the causes of divorce to suit his own position. But it is worth remarking, that he seems to have blinded himself to the absolute prohibition given in Mark and in Luke, where the same question is raised, and where Jesus prohibits divorce absolutely, allowing no condition whatever as a justifiable reason. And yet, although he never shows any recognition of these two absolute prohibitions he must have had them in mind; for he speaks several times of the introduction to the question of divorce in Mark 10, for there Christ speaks of the Mosaic permission as a law, and Milton finds it to his advantage to draw attention to this; he also speaks of the introduction to the same question in Luke 16, for there Jesus says that he did not mean to abrogate the laws; and this also it is to Milton's advantage to point out. But the two actual prohibitions recorded in Mark and Luke as absolute, he seems studiously to ignore.

Indeed, Milton seems in this discussion to close his eyes to Biblical prohibitions more than once. He makes much of the seventh chapter of the Corinthians in which the believer is allowed to let the unbeliever

depart; and he attempts to extend the separation there allowed for differences of faith, to a divorce for other causes, and argues; "that man or wife, who hates in wedlock, is perpetually unsociable, unpeaceful, or unduteous, either not being able, or not willing to perform what the main ends of marriage demand in help and solace, cannot be said to care for who should be dearest in the home; therefore is worse than an infidel in both regards, either in undertaking a duty which he cannot perform. . . .or not performing what he hath undertaken. . . .to the perjury of himself, more irreligious than heathenism. The blameless person, therefore, hath as good a plea to sue out his delivery from this bondage, as from the desertion of an infidel." (p. 413, Tetrachordon) And yet, although he enlarges in Tetrachordon to such an extent on this particular passage, the one immediately before it, prohibiting divorce between believers, he passes over with only a word, accepting this prohibition as somehow supporting his own argument; the prohibition is worded as follows: "Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." "This intimates" writes Milton, "but what

our Saviour taught before, that divorce is not rashly to be made, but reconcilement to be persuaded and endeavoured, as oft as the cause can have to do with reconcilement, and is not under the dominion of blameless nature. . ." (p. 403, Tetrachordon) He seems to conclude that where a reconcilement could not be effected a divorce would be given; but if he thought so, he must have been closing his eyes to the text, for St. Paul plainly says "if she depart, let her remain unmarried." And in another letter by the same apostle, there is another prohibition of divorce, Rom. 7:2. "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband; So then if while her husband liveth she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead she is free from that law." This passage Milton disregards completely.

General Survey of Milton's Position

For our purpose, the important question to consider here is not whether or not Milton was able to support his position by Biblical evidence, but rather,

whether he was or was not submissive to the word of the Bible, in this whole discussion on divorce. In view of the elaborate and strained interpretations we have just followed, and the general difficulty of making the New Testament support his stand, it is hard to believe that he based his theory of divorce on the Bible alone. It is easier to believe that he found the rules regarding marriage (whether from personal experience, or not, is unimportant) quite out of harmony with his views on liberty and his love of reason. The existing rule on the question was a type of tyranny, and as such called forth his indignation and opposition; he then formed his theory of what the law should be in a world under the rule of liberty and governed according to reason, and forced the Bible into accordance with his theory. On the other hand, he does not for a moment question the word of God or become impatient at the inconsistency between the Old and New Testaments; and we feel that he will never be happy in his position regarding divorce unless he can feel that he has the support of the Bible. The whole series of tracts represents the struggle between the two sides of his nature at this time -- on the one hand, fighting above all else for individual

freedom, and on the other deeply religious and feeling the necessity of reliance upon the word of the Bible.

This argument of Milton's was, of course, quite contrary to the orthodox position and naturally brought him a great deal of opposition. Three of the men engaged in drawing up the Westminster Confession, were particularly vehement in their denunciation, and levelled their attacks directly against him. Daniel Featley wrote in 1644-5 in "Dipper's Dept.,,etc:" "Witness a tractate on Divorce, in which the bonds of marriage are let loose to inordinate lust and putting away wives for many other causes besides that which our Saviour only approveth, viz., in case of adultery." Joseph Caryl licensed the anonymous answer to Milton's divorce tracts, in these words: "To preserve the strength of the marriage-bond and the Honour of that estate against those said breaches and dangerous abuses of it which common discontents (on this side Adultery) are likely to make in unstaid minds and men given to change, by taking in or grounding themselves upon the opinion answered and with good reason confuted in the Treatise, I have approved the printing and publishing of it." And Sir Herbert Palmer, one of the most influential men on the Assembly preached

before the two Houses of Parliament, in August 1644, a sermon from which the following quotation is extracted; "If any plead conscience for the lawfulness of polygamy; or for divorce, for other causes than Christ and his Apostles mention (of which a wicked book is abroad and uncensured, though deserving to be burnt, whose author hath been so impudent as to set his name to it and dedicate it to yourselves). . . . .Will you grant a toleration for all this?" And when the Westminster Confessions of Faith were drawn up a few years later, it would seem as if Milton's plea for easier divorce had influenced the divines only to take a more rigid stand; for the wording of the Confession seems to make special provision against such arguments; . . . "Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; Yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: Wherein a publick and ordinary course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case." (Westminster Confessions, Chapter 24).

Milton's Later Work on the Same Question

Despite the opposition he received, however, Milton held to his opinion, and in The Christian Doctrine, written between 1655-60, we find him taking the same stand and speaking of marriage as follows: "Marriage by its definition is a union of the most intimate nature; but not indissoluble, as some contend on the ground of its being subjoined: Matt. 19:5, 'they two shall be one flesh.' These words, properly considered, do not imply that marriage is absolutely indissoluble, but only that it ought not to be lightly dissolved." (p. 240, C. D. v. I)

Practically the same arguments are given again, but, by this time, Milton has reached the conclusion that the coming of Christ has freed us from all the laws of Moses, moral and judicial, as well as ceremonial, and this of course takes away one of the supports of his original position. However he can still argue that none of the laws of God would permit sin, and that they may be used as guides on disputed questions; and so the Mosaic Law on this point is brought in much as before to support Milton's position. In the Christian Doctrine, perhaps in defiance of the opponents of his earlier work on divorce and of the

little notice that had been taken of his argument, as far as concerned a remedy, he adds for good measure, an argument justifying polygamy; a justification not easily refutable on scriptural grounds. As if deliberately going contrary the Presbyterians whose definition of marriage is as follows: "Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time." (Westminster Confession, Chapter 24), Milton writes: "Marriage. . ..is a most intimate connection of man with woman ordained by God, for the purpose either of procreation of children, or of the relief and solace of life," and proceeds, "In the definition, which I have given, I have not said in compliance with the common opinion, of one man with one woman: lest I should by implication charge the holy patriarchs and pillars of our faith, Abraham, and the others who had more than one wife at the same time, with habitual fornication and adultery; and lest I should be forced to exclude from the sanctuary of God as spurious, the holy offspring which sprang from them, yea, the whole of the sons of Israel, for whom the sanctuary itself was made. . . .Either,

therefore, polygamy is a true marriage, or all children born in that state are spurious; which would include the whole race of Jacob, the twelve holy tribes chosen by God." Then, he sets out to support his position by various passages in Scripture to show that polygamy was common among the Jews of the Old Testament, and not unheard of in the New Testament, as is shown by St. Paul's command that an elder or a deacon should be the husband of one wife, which command would not have been necessary if monogamy had rigidly been enforced.

There are no objections to bring against Milton's argument from the Old Testament, for there, as he says polygamy was common. In the New Testament, the four records of Christ's prohibition of divorce state that "whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery." Milton would say here however that if he did not put away the first wife, the taking of the second one would not be considered as adultery; whether or not this is the real interpretation intended it is difficult to say, and St. Paul's advice to the Romans gives us little help, for although he forbids a woman to marry another man while her husband lives, he says nothing about a husband taking more than one wife;

and as Milton argues, St. Paul stipulates that a deacon should be the husband of one wife, as if monogamy were not universally practiced.

Milton's Appreciation of Spiritual and Social Side of Marriage

If we are not sure in this discussion as to whether or not Milton is genuinely submissive to the word of the Bible on the question of marriage and divorce, there is one point recurring again and again throughout the work, on which his attitude is in direct opposition to that of scripture. The Bible teaches that adultery is the greatest sin that can be committed against matrimony, and -- to put aside elaborate interpretations and explantions, Christ rules that this sin is the only one for which the Marriage tie may be broken. Milton, on the other hand, considers it of little importance in comparison to differences of temperament which would bring to marriage life-long unhappiness.

"Next, adultery does not exclude her other fitness, her other pleasingness; she may be otherwise both loving and prevalent as many adulteresses be; but in this general unfitness or alienation she can be nothing to him that can please. In adultery nothing is given from the husband, which he misses, or enjoys the less,

as it may be subtly given; but this unfitness defrauds him of the whole contentment which is sought in wedlock. And what benefit to him, though nothing be given by the stealth of adultery to another, if that which there is to give, whether it be solace, or society, be not such as may justly content him?" (p. 397, Tetrachordon)

Scripture tells us that adultery is an unforgivable sin; indeed one of those punishable by death. (lev. 18:20 20:20; Deut, 5:8; 22:22). But with Milton it is a sin which may be forgiven and forgotten: "For this, as it is not felt, nor troubles him who perceives it not, so being perceived may be soon repented, soon amended: soon, if it can be pardoned, may be redeemed with the more ardent love in her who hath the pardon." (p. 397, Tetrachordon)

His appreciation of the spiritual and social side of marriage has led him here to a different sense of values from that taught in the Bible; and yet we cannot say that he is deliberately departing from the Bible at this point; for he seems to be not at all aware that his attitude is not in harmony with the severity accorded to adultery throughout the scripture. The words of God in Genesis, at the institution of

marriage, he takes to be in accordance with his own emphasis on the social relation; and then he seems quite unconsciously to discount the rigid laws in regard to adultery. There is no attempt to reconcile his attitude with the fact that this sin was a most serious offence throughout the Old and New Testaments, for he simply fails to see his departure from the Bible at this point. And so we leave the question of divorce.

IV

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS

What is the power of a king, and how does he acquire this power? Is it given him by God, or by the people? Is he reponsible to his Maker alone, or to the people over whom he rules? Was there any Biblical justification for the claim of the Stuarts that they held their position by divine right, and could be called to account by God only? These were very live and struggling questions in Milton's day, and hotly contested on both sides.

In 1644, Samuel Rutherford wrote his Lex Rex, which contained such principles as the following: "The king hath no masterly dominion over the people, but only fiduciary." "That the power of the king is feduciary, that is, given to him by God in trust, Royalists do not deny; but we hold that the trust is put upon the king by the people." "The people may be without the king, but not the king without the people." "Though God immediately without any action of the people make kings, this is a weak reason, to prove they cannot unmake them." "I utterly deny that God ever ordained such an irrational creature as an absolute monarch." "Whatever the king does as king,

that he doth by a power borrowed from the Estates, who made him king. He must then be nothing but an eminent servant of the state."

On the other side, the Stuart kings and all of the Royalist party vehemently asserted the divine right of kings. Sir Robert Filmer was one of those who carried this doctrine almost to ridiculous extremes. His complete theory is given in the Patriarchia, which was not published until after his death; but he expressed his opinions sufficiently in the works which he published during his life to make his position clear and to influence the thought of his time. In 1642 he published his "Freeholder's Grand Inquest touching our Sovereign Lord the King", and his "Parliament" in which he asserts that the Lords merely advise the king, the Commons only "perform and consent to the ordinances of Parliament; the king makes the laws, guided by his own will only. It is monstrous for the people to think of judging or deposing the king, for that would make them judges in their own cause. In the same year he wrote, "The Anarchy of a Mixed and Limited Monarchy"; the argument of which is easily seen by its title. Even Thomas Hobbes, who did not believe in the divine right of kings, was just as emphatically

in favour of the king's absolute control; for we have, he argued, in making a compact with the king to rule over us, placed ourselves unreservedly in his power. "Our Saviour Christ hath not given us new Laws, but counsell to observe those we are subject to; that is to say, the Laws of Nature, and the Laws of our several Sovereigns: Nor did He make any new Law for the Jews in His Sermon on the Mount, but only expounded the Laws of Moses , to which they were subject before. The Laws of God, therefore, are none but the Laws of Nature, whereof the principal is, that we should not violate our Faith, that is, a commandment to obey our Civil Sovereigns, which we constituted over us, by mutual pact one with another." (Leviathan,1651). As we should expect, Milton took his share in this discussion. He had written against tyranny and church government; had written on divorce, in an attempt to acquire domestic freedom; and now we find him struggling for liberty in civil affairs. His first contribution was a pamphlet entitled, "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates," it must have been composed during the king's trial, apparently written in anticipation of the final verdict with the intention of reconciling the mind of the people to

the event, and appeared in print very shortly after the king was executed. This was followed by his "Eikonoklastes" (1649) written in answer to Eikon Basilike, which pretended to be a private record of the king's sufferings in his last years; then, in 1651, by the "Defence of the English People against Salmasuis", written in reply to "Salmasius' Defence of King Charles I," and in 1654, a "Second Defence" in reply to an anonymous work: "The Cry of the King's Blood to Heaven".

The Origin of The Office of a King

He discusses the origin of the office of a king, insists that man was made free, that the contract between ruler and subject is a freely assumed one, devised for the sake of the general good: "No Man," he argues, "who knows aught, can be so stupid to deny, that all men naturally were born free, being the image and resemblance of God himself, and were, by privilege above all the creatures, born to command and not to obey: and that they lived so, till from the root of Adam's transgression falling among themselves to do wrong and violence, ...they agreed by common league to bind each other from mutual injury, and jointly to

defend themselves against any that gave disturbance or opposition to such agreement." (Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, p. 8). ✱

This voluntary contract represents the original institution of kingship, and the purposes of this institution are our guide by which to judge the actions of a king. In the discussion on Divorce, the test for the success, or in Milton's eyes, the validity, of a marriage was the extent to which it fulfilled the purposes of marriage as set forth in the institution; so, in this discussion, the king is a true king and the people are bound to him only so long as he fulfils the purposes for which his office was instituted. When he fails to do that, he is no longer a

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✱ Compare Thomas Hobbes' De Cive, 1642: "Men are by nature equal. Differences in rank are created by civil law. Aristotle is of a different opinion. Men, he says, are by nature so created that some are called to rule and others to serve; the differences in endowment make masters and slaves. "This is contrary to reason and experience. No man is so stupid that he would not prefer to be his own master. Yet how often do the well-informed depend upon brute force." Nevertheless, Hobbes insisted that once a king is placed over a people, nothing that he does can justify the rebellion of his subjects, for, in making him king over them, they have given power unreservedly into his hands.

king, but a tyrant: "For a tyrant is but like a king upon a stage, a man in a vizor, and acting the part of a king in a play; he is not really a king." (Ten-of Kings etc.)

Regarding this institution of the office of a king, however, in Milton's work on Divorce he drew his description of the institution of marriage from Genesis, the first place where it is mentioned in the Bible. To be consistent, he should refer when discussing the origination of kingship, to the first mention in the Bible of the actual institution of a king which is I Sam. 8, and there the Israelites did not ask for a king "by common league to bind each other from mutual injury , and jointly to defend themselves against any that gave disturbance of opposition to such agreement." But they came to Sammuel and asked that the judges who were thought to be placed over them by the will of God, be replaced by kings; "Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Milton goes on: "they saw it needful to ordain some authority that might restrain by force and punishment what was violated against peace and common right." But that was not the reason why the Israelites asked for a king, for they already had judges to restrain by

force and punishment anything against law and right. True, the judges were growing unsatisfactory, but that was the fault of the men, not of the office. To continue: "for ease, for order, and lest each man should be his own partial judge, they communicated and derived either to one, whom for the eminence of his wisdom and integrity they chose above the rest, or to more than one, whom they thought of equal deserving. . . ,not to be their lords and masters. . . but to be their deputies and commissioners, to execute, by virtue of their entrusted power, that justice, which else every man by the bond of nature and of covenant must have executed for himself, and for one another." But the Israelites did not select any man for the eminence of his wisdom and integrity above the rest, but they asked for a king, and God chose t them one. They had no voice whatever in the choosing, nor did they even have an idea of who would be chosen until it was formally announced to them.

"These", writes Milton, "for a while governed well, and with much equity decided all things at their arbitrement; till the temptation of such a power, left absolute in their hands, perverted them at length to injustice and impartiality." But Saul, the first

king of the Israelites, caused the Lord to say: "It repenteth me that I have set us Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments;" David the second king, for private and personal reasons, had one of his subjects killed; and Solomon the third king, in his later years: "did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord." and "he kept not that which the Lord commanded."

"Then did they," continues Milton, "who now by trial had found the danger and inconvenience of committing arbitrary power to any, invent laws, either framed or consented to by all, that should confine and limit the authority of whom they chose to govern them: . . ." But the Israelites continued under a succession of kings, the majority of whom were either weak or vicious, and although they did rebel against the son of Solomon (I Kings 12:19), we never hear of them inventing laws, "framed or consented to by all," anywhere in Biblical story. Their kings and their laws were both given to them by God; the laws by revelation of Moses, and their king, first, by God's word to Samuel, then by power of succession. We do not

here question the soundness of Milton's history, but we do maintain that his history is not Biblical history. The man who bases his arguments for divorce on the first institution of marriage, and on the laws regarding it as given by God through Moses, to be consistent should base his arguments regarding the origination of kingship on the first institution of it by God, and regarding the origination of law on the first instance of God giving laws to the Israelites, his chosen people.

The Position in Relation to the Bible

After having defined the relation between ruler and subject, and limited the rights of a king to the satisfactory fulfilling of the purposes of his office, Milton proceeds to find Biblical support for his theory. There are some passages in the Old Testament particularly which seem to justify the theory that the king is responsible to God alone; and these Milton has to interpret elaborately before the Bible will accord him full support.

The advocates of the divine right of kings made much of the words of David: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned" (Ps. 51); and Milton proceeds to clear

away this difficulty very early in the discussion: "To say kings are accountable to none but God, is the overturning of all law and government. . . . . yet some would persuade us that this absurd opinion was King David's, because in the fifty-first Psalm he calls out to God, "Against thee only have I sinned," as if David had imagined, that to murder Uriah and adulterate his wife had been no sin against his neighbor. David, by those words, could mean no other, than either that the depth of his guiltiness was known to God only, or to so few as had not the will or power to question him, or that the sin against God was greater beyond compare than against Uriah." (Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.) This interpretation, though it seems not a very adequate one is practically the same as he uses later in his reply to Salmasuis in the same passage: "As if David, in the midst of his repentance when overwhelmed with sorrow, and almost drowned in tears, he was humbly imploring God's mercy, had any thoughts of this kingly right of his when his heart was so low, that he thought he deserved not the right of a slave. And can we think that he despised all the people of God, his own brethren, to that degree, as to believe that he might murder them, plun-

der them, and commit adultery with their wives, and yet not sin against them all this while? So holy a man could never guilty of such insufferable pride, nor have so little knowledge either of himself or of his duty to his neighbour. So without doubt when he says, "Against thee only," he meant, against thee 'chiefly' have I sinned, etc." But whatever he means, the words of a Psalm are too full of poetry and this Psalm too full of passion, to afford us any exact definition of right and justice; nor is it proper to argue anything of that nature from them. (Defence of the People of England, pp. 50-1). But in I Sam. 24:6, when David, could easily have killed Saul, he said, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." Salmasuis of course makes use of this in his argument against Milton, saying: "But yet David, who was both a king and a prophet, would not take away Saul's life because he was God's anointed." Milton's reply here is: "does it follow that because David refused to do a thing, therefore we are obliged not to do that very thing? David was a private person, and would not kill a king; is that a precedent for a parliament? for a

whole nation? David would not revenge his own quarrel by putting his enemy to death by stealth; does it follow, that therefore the magistrates must not punish a malefactor according to law?" But to say that David's reason for not killing the king was the fact that his quarrel with Saul was a private one does not give a satisfactory answer, for David tells us in plain words what his reason was: "seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." Besides, we have other evidence that it was not only in his capacity as personal enemy and private citizen that he felt the wrong of injuring the king; Salmasius reminds Milton of this, that David commanded the young man who finally ended Saul's life to be put to death, for he had "slain the Lord's anointed". Milton's answer to this is as follows: "I do not understand what cause David had to be so severe upon that man, for pretending to have hastened the king's death, and in effect to have put him out of his pain when he was dying; unless it were to take away from the Israelites all suspicion of his own having been instrumental in it, whom they might look upon as one who had revolted to the Philistines, and was part of their army." This is probably the weakest argument that Milton has yet had to use against

difficult Biblical passages, for he has to resort to the insinuation that David, whom he elsewhere considers to be all that is holy and righteous, was here insincere, not only that, but criminally insincere; taking advantage of his power as king to kill another man in order to remove suspicion of guilt from himself, especially when the only fault of the Amalekite had been to put a dying man out of his misery, and that dying man, a tyrant, an enemy to the nation.

Milton's David must have been a man of many qualities: first we hear that he was too holy a man to say "Against thee only have I sinned" in a way that would not take full account of the injury he had done to his people, and then we hear that he killed an innocent young man merely to remove suspicion from himself.

Nor have we a satisfactory answer to the fact that David gave a general command against injuring the king: "who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?", Milton's only attempt is in this passage: "What if David laid a charge upon himself and other private persons, not to stretch forth their hands against the Lord's anointed. Does not God himself command princes not so

much as to 'touch his anointed?' which were no other than his people. Ps. 105,". . would any man offer to infer. . . .that believers are not to be called in question though they offend against the laws. . . . " But David did not merely lay a charge upon himself and other private people not to lift a hand against the Lord's anointed; it is more than that; he says, "who can stretch forth his hand, and be guiltless?" This is not simply a private charge binding himself and certain persons, but a general question that may be taken as rule applicable to any member of the king's subjects.

Now let us consider verse 7 of I Sam. 8. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, . . .they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Milton uses this verse only to support his contention that God did not wish the Israelites to be under the rule of a king and was angry with them for desiring one. "God frequently protests that he was extremely displeased with them for asking a king. . . .'They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me. . .'". But this very verse, it seems to me is a strong argument against Milton's

position. The Israelites before the installation of their king had been directly under the voice of God; in seeking a king they were not so much rejecting Samuel, since he was only the instrument by which they heard the will of God; but they were rejecting God himself. "They have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Why does God say, "that I should not reign over them"? Simply because they will be under another rule, that of their king; they have gone out from under the jurisdiction of God, and come under that of a king. Milton would maintain that they only need to remain under the rule of the king as long as he is upright, honorable and kingly, as long as his rule is the rule of God and of Nature. But this verse seems to oppose that theory: for if they had been considered as under the king only so long as he ruled them by the rule of God, then God need not have been angry, nor have felt that in choosing a king they were rejecting him; indeed, his relation to the people would have been little altered from what it was in the time of the judges, when the people were guided directly by his own rule and wish through the commands of divinely inspired leaders.

Regarding Solomon's injuction Eccl. 8:2, to "keep the king's commandment and that in regard to oath of God," Milton says: "But as they swear allegiance to kings, do not kings likewise swear to obey and maintain the laws of God, and those of their own country? So the Reubenites and Gadites promised obedience to Joshua: Josh. 1:17, 'According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so we will hearken unto thee; only the Lord thy God be with thee as he was with Moses.' Here is an express condition," But Joshua was not a king; and the conditions under which he was followed should not be a basis for arguing that the Israelites chose their kings on that condition.

In the New Testament also, Milton found several passages needing careful explanation if he was to force the whole letter of the Bible into support of his theory. Matt. 22:21, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Such an ambiguous passage it is hard to bring for support or opposition to either side, but Milton feels rightly that it may be used in opposition to his theory and he is not happy until he has dealt with it. We get the same argument

that we have found in the divorce tracts, the Pharisees were tempting, and so we need not take Christ's answer literally. "It was not for nothing that the Pharisees put such questions to him, tempting him; and that at the same time they told him, that he regarded not the person of any man: nor was it for nothing that he was angry when such questions were proposed to him." Matt. 21,". . .It is evident, that our Saviour's principles concerning government were not agreeable to the humour of the Pharisees. His answer too implies as much; by which he rather turned them away, than instructed them. . . ."Render unto all men their dues," says St. Paul, Rom. 12, So that Caesar must not engross all to himself. Our liberty is not Caesar's; it is a blessing we have received from God himself; it is what we are born to; to lay this down at Caesar's feet, which we derive not from him, which we are not beholdent to him for, were an unworthy action, and degrading of our very nature. . . .Being therefore peculiarly God's own, and consequently things that are to be given to him, we are entirely free by nature, and cannot, without the greatest sacrilege imaginable, be reduced into a condition of slavery to any man, especially to a wicked, unjust, cruel

tyrant." In a way characteristically Milton's own, in a way which insists upon man's individual liberty and worth, and individual responsibility to God alone, he has brought this passage to a support of his own theory.

Two more passages only from the New Testament, then we have considered the most opposing parts of Scripture. "But what says St. Peter? 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or to governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well: for so is the will of God," etc. This epistle Peter wrote, not only to private persons, but those strangers scattered and dispersed through Asia; who, in those places where they sojourned, had no other right than what the laws of hospitality entitled them to. . .. But let us suppose that St. Peter had directed his epistle to the natural-born subjects, and those not private persons neither; suppose he had writ to the senate of Rome; what then? No law that is grounded upon a reason expressly set down in the law itself obligeth further than the reason of it extends. 'Be subject', says he. . . .that is, according to the genuine sense and import of the word. 'Be subordinate, or

legally subject'. . . .'Submit for the Lord's sake". Why so? Because a king is an officer "appointed by God for the punishment of evil doers and the praise of them that do well; for so is the will of God: "to wit, that we should submit and yield obedience to such as here described. There is not a word spoken of any other." This argument is very suggestive of the ones used in regard to Marriage and Kingship: a marriage is properly no marriage unless it fulfils the purposes of its institution; a king is no king unless he satisfies the purposes of the origin of his office; and now a law is no law when it fails to carry out the reason of its origin. This reasoning, although it would be ideal in an ideal world, would under ordinary circumstances, tend to remove all means of keeping law and order, and allow every man to decide for himself as to the validity of institutions or laws, according to the extent to which he thought they fulfilled the purposes of theri institution.

Another difficult passage is Rom. 13:1, 2, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that

resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Milton's interpretation is this: "he writes to private persons, and those of meaner rank; and yet he gives us a true and clear account of the reason, the original and the design of government; and shows us the true and proper ground of our obedience, that it is far from imposing a necessity upon us of being slaves, . . .St. Paul does not only command the people but princes themselves to be in subjection; who are not above the laws but bound by them; "For there is no power but of God": that is, no form, no lawful constitution of any government. . . .what powers are, are ordained of God; so that Paul speaks only of a lawful magistracy. For what is evil and amiss cannot be said to be ordained, because it is disorderly; order and disorder cannot consist together in the same subject. The apostle says, "The powers that be" and you, Salmasius, interpret his words as if he had said "The powers that now be". . . .I am very well content you should read the words so, and draw that conclusion from them. The consequence will be that England ought to yield obedience to the present government." On this interpretation his opponent is caught and on the other also: "He that resists the

powers, to wit, a lawful power, resists the ordinance of God. Kings themselves come under penalty of this law, when they resist the senate and act contrary to the laws. But do they resist the ordinance of God that resist an unlawful power, or a person that goes about to overthrow and destroy a lawful one? No man living in his right wits can maintain such an assertion." He then proceeds to show that Paul must have meant the lawful powers only, for in the next few verses Paul has written that one who does good, will receive praise and one who does wrong, punishment, and Milton argues that this could be true only under a rightful ruler. But Paul makes no distinction in his letter between lawful and unlawful power, but says decidedly "there is no power that is not ordained of God," and although he does conclude that righteousness will receive reward and wrongdoing punishment there is no suggestion that if it failed to turn out so, the Romans should resist the powers over them. The statement that the powers that be are ordained of God, has very good support from several similar statements in the Testament which Milton ignores altogether; Dan.2:21, "(God) changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth

kings and setteth up kings." I Sam. 2:8, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes. . ." Ps. 75:7, "God is the judge; he putteth down one and setteth up another."

However, in spite of his difficulties, Milton has much support for his argument in the Bible: it is true that in this matter, God accorded unwillingly to the wish of the Israelites, and that he is spoken of(Hosea 13:11) as having given them a king in his wrath; it is true that the Israelites resisted Rehoboam and after that remained in rebellion to the house of David. Also God could not have approved of unquestioning obedience to a king, for when the midwives, in the first chapter of Exodus, disobeyed Pharoah, God therefore "dealt well with the midwives;" and if it may be argued that the kings in the Old Testament held their power directly from God, it may be replied also, that the prophets never obeyed them to the extent of renouncing their right of free speech, of prophesying ruin and destruction through the weak and vicious policies of these kings. Further,in the New Testament, Jesus expressly tells the disciples that it shall not be among them as among the Gentiles, where the "the kings exercise

lordship over them," and although he makes no pretensions of laying the grounds for any specific form of government, his words seem more in harmony with the spirit of democracy than of autocracy.

Regarding the laws of a nation, and Milton's insistence that we should be bound only to laws framed with the consent of the people and for the good of the whole nation, this is an argument that is not really supported or refuted in the Bible. For the Jews were considered to have had their laws directly from God, and although that bound them to laws in which they had had no voice, the king was bound to these laws also. In short, the laws of the Jews were neither from the king, nor of their own making but received in a way which Milton could not apply to modern politics.

The question at the end of this discussion is simply this: did the Bible influence Milton to think as he did, or did he formulate his theory and then bring the Bible into support of it? That he took the latter course there seems no doubt. As we have seen early in the discussion, he introduces the question by setting forth the principle that kings were originally chosen by the people, to govern by laws made by, or else with the consent of the subjects, and that they were

directly responsible to the people. His first principles, then, on which he bases his theory, depart from the Biblical order, and evidently his theory was settled first, then the Bible was called in to support it. But at the same time, there is not enough Biblical evidence on this question, one way or the other, for us to say whether Milton was, in his theory, obedient or not to the teaching of scripture. As in the divorce question however, it is significant that he always takes the interpretation that gives individual liberty, but also always considers the word of the Bible as final, and is not happy until he can feel that his theory and scriptural teaching are essentially one.

V

THE CREATION

Throughout his life, Milton seems to have taken the Genesis account of creation very literally. He speaks very often of woman as being made for man, and from man; and over and over again he expresses wonder at the ease with which the first man gave names to all the birds and beasts as they passed in order before him. As for the actual details and the general order, in his discussions of the creation he follows the Biblical story almost to the word.

But there is one question, however, relating to creation on which he is ready to argue against the majority. At the creation, did God simply mould the world into shape out of some pre-existent matter, or did he create the world and matter at once, ex nihilo? The ex nihilo theory is the generally accepted one, and is given in the Westminster Confession in these words: "It pleased God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost . . . .to create or make of nothing the world and all things therein." But this view of the creation, Milton flatly refused to accept; he was too literal a man, toodependent upon explanations that could be given in terms of human reason, to be able to believe

that God created the world with no pre-existent material. He could accept Jesus' multiplication of the five loaves and two fishes to the extent that the whole multitude could be fed; but that the world was made from nothing at all, he would not admit.

On this question, the Bible tells us little definitely. We read in Genesis, of course, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; there is no record of any pre-existent material from which the earth was to be made, and the conclusion that the world was made from nothing is rather a natural one from the words. But not a necessary one, however. The Hebrew word "bara" used here, like our word "create", may be used to denote the shaping or forming of something definite from unformed material; or in the higher sense of "creating": that is, producing something out of nothing. Further, from the side of those who dispute the ex nihilo theory, it may be argued that the same word is used again in the first chapter of Genesis, in verse 27, where God is spoken of as creating man in his own image; and although again we are not told that this creation depended on pre-existent material we know that the Bible intends us to believe that it did, as far at least as the physical part of

man is concerned, for we read in the next chapter Gen. 2:7, and often later in the Bible that God created man out of the dust of the earth.

This is Milton's position in regard to the question: "It is clear then that the world was formed out of matter of some kind or other. For since action and passion are relative terms, and since consequently, no agent can act externally unless there be some patient such as matter, it appears impossible that God could have created this world out of nothing; not from any defect of power on his part, but because it was necessary that something should have previously existed capable of receiving passively the exertion of the divine efficacy." (Christian Doctrine I; p. 177)

Now if God never created matter in the sense of making it out of nothing, matter must have existed from the beginning and thus be eternal, as God himself. But to have matter exist from eternity, independently of God, certainly seems to detract from the One Supreme Being and almost suggests two eternal Gods. There is, writes Milton, only one solution for the difficulty, and that is, that matter must have originated from God himself: "The original matter. . . was a substance and derivable from no other source

than from the fountain of every substance, though at first confused and formless, being afterwards adorned and digested into order by the hand of God. . . . . Matter, like the form and nature of the angels itself, proceeded incorruptible from God. . . .It is objected, however, that body cannot emanate from spirit. I reply, much less then can body emanate from nothing. For spirit being the more excellent substance, virtually and essentially contains within itself the inferior one." (C. D. v. I pp. 179 - 181.) This theory that matter originates from God, Milton supports by several passages from the Bible: Rom. 11:36, "for of him, and through him,,and to him are all things." I Cor. 8:6, "there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things." Heb. 2:11 "for both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one." Another supporting passage which, as far as I am aware, he has overlooked is: Eph. 4:6, "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

This, Milton argues, is the only theory consistent with the infinity of God: "Nor. . . .can it be understood in what sense God can properly be called infinite, if he be capable of receiving any accession whatever; which would be the case if anything could

exist in the nature of things, which had not first been of God and in God (C. D. 1; p. 181). And this aspect of the infinity of God is repeated in Paradise Lost:

> Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill
> Infinitude; nor vacuous the space,
> Though I, uncircumscribed, myself retire,
> And put not forth my goodness, ...

Now, as to how this matter out of which the world was made, first proceeded from God, and later made into the world, Milton is not very definite. But it seems thatGod's retraction from a part of himself left chaos, which was later put into order by the power of God. "It was a substance, and derivable from no other source than from the fountain of every substance, though at first confused and formless, being afterwards adorned and digested into power by the hand of God." (C.D. 1; p. 179).

This chaos is described with particular vividness in Paradise Lost:

> On Heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
> They viewed the vast immeasurable Abyss,
> Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
> Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
> And surging waves, [illegible] mountains to assault
> Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole
> (Book ", 210,--)

And it is from this sea of raging chaos that our world

is shaped, its bounds being marked by means of a compass:

> One foot he centred, and the other turned
> Round through the vast profundity obscure,
> And said, 'Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds;
> This be thy just circumference, O World.'
> (Book 7, 228,--)

This conception of the creation, of course, gives an entirely new meaning to matter; it is as eternal as God himself, indeed, it is part of God, and hence divine. The distinction between matter and spirit is at once much less marked, for instead of having spirit as eternal and matter as merely transient and temporary we have them both eternal, both never beginning and never ending, both having proceeded from the Maker of all.

This connection between matter and spirit Milton may never have recognized as the direct consequence of his theory of the eternity of matter; but the connection between them he did recognize; and he describes it in Paradise Lost.

> . . . . . .one first matter all,
> Indued with various forms, various degrees
> Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
> But more refined, more spirituous and pure,
> As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending
> Each in their several active spheres assigned
> Till body up to spirit work. . . . .
> . . . . . .So from the root
> Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves.
> (Bk. 5, 474)

And again:

> . . . . . .though what if Earth
> Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
> Each to other like more than on earth is thought!
> (BOOK 5, 574)

Cosmography

Now to come to the cosmography of Milton's universe. In the Christian Doctrine, except to discuss the location of hell and the reason that determined the choice of this location, Milton gives little space to cosmography. In Paradise Lost, on the other hand, it was almost necessary for Milton to give a clear picture of the universe in which the action takes place; and this universe we find is built on the Ptolemaic plan, with the earth as the centre, and the other bodies revolving around it. That Milton was quite familiar with the Copernican theory and even admitted the possibility of its truth, we know from such passages as in Paradise Lost:

> . . . . . .whether the Prime Orb,
> Incredible how swift had thither rowled
> Diurnal, or this less volubil Earth
> By shorter flight to the east, had left him
> there.
> (BOOK 4, 592)

and the longer, more definitely questioning passage in Book 8, beginning:

. . . . . .What if the Sun
Be centre to the World, and other Stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
(Book 8, 122)

However, the Ptolemaic system naturally appealed to Milton as a background for Paradise Lost: it offered a more concrete setting than did the newly discovered and not yet established Copernican system; and it was acceptable to the public by its familiarity, by long tradition, and endeared by countless associations with poetry. But apart from this, Milton had another reason for wanting to keep to the Ptolemaic system in Paradise Lost: he was writing a Biblical story and he wanted to keep as closely as possible to Biblical cosmography. The cosmography of the Bible, it is true, is not definitely set forth anywhere, but there are certain conceptions that would not fit into the Copernican theory, but are in harmony with the Ptolemaic.

The Sun, in the Bible, is definitely not stationary: Ps. 19:4, 5. "In them (the heavens) hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bride groom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." There are also a number of other passages which, however, are not so significant, and

may not mean any more than we mean when we speak of the sun as rising or setting, in which the sun is spoken of as arising or going down: II Sam. 23:4, "when the sun riseth." Ps. 104:22, "The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together." Eccl. 1:5, "the sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down." Isaiah 60:20, "The sun shall no more go down." etc. and when the miracle of the tenth chapter of Joshua is recorded, it is the sun that is described as standing still: Joshua 10:13. "And the sun stood still and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." Again the earth is spoken of as the footstool of God (Isaiah 66:1; I Chron. 28:2; Matt. 5:35; Acts 7:49.), and Milton's world, hanging by a chain, would, despite its revolving spheres, be more easily conceived as a footstool than the world of the Copernican system.

Even in details, Milton keeps closely to the Biblical account: it would be difficult indeed to lay out the dimensions of a sphere by means of compasses, but the Creator is pictured in Paradise Lost as doing so:

> He took the golden compasses, prepared
> In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
> The Universe. . . . . .
> (Book 7, 225)

This passage is probably influenced by the description in the Bible: Ps. 8:27, "When he prepared the Heavens I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth." The instrument that God was pictured as using when the world was thought of as a flat disk, Milton has taken over to the creation of a world which even in his account was recognized as a sphere.

Lastly, Milton preferred the Ptolemaic theory because it set man on a world which was at the centre of all, and emphasized the importance of man himself. This emphasis on man's importance, besides being Miltonic, and suitable to the construction and drama of the poem, is also Biblical. For the account in Genesis certainly suggests that the world, and everything that is in the world and around the world is made for man himself.

VI

THE MOSAIC LAW

Shortly after the time of Christ a doubt seems to have come into the minds of believers as to whether they were still bound to the whole Mosaic Law, or whether the new religion of faith had freed them from this rigid and detailed set of rules. Even in the time of the apostles there was apparently a tendency to claim freedom from the law and to place the emphasis on faith, as of itself sufficient for salvation; for we find Paul and Peter both warning believers not to be carried in their freedom too far from the precepts of the law. Eph. 5:5,6, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." II Pet. 2: 18, 19, "For when theyspeak great swelling words of vanity they allure through the lusts of the flesh. . . .while they promise them liberty they themselves are the servants of corruption.

Before considering Milton's attitude toward the Mosaic Law, it may be well to go back to the Bible and

see what Jesus and his followers taught. Jesus himself seems to have taken the Old Law more or less for granted -- it was not part of His work work either to set forth new laws, nor to break down the old; But at the same time he was impatient with conformity with ceremonial law unless supported by genuine righteousness. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay the tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." (Matt. 23:23) The distinction between clean and unclean seems to have been to him of little importance. Mark 7:15 - 23, "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they which defile the man. . . .For from within out of the heart. . . .proceed evil thoughts." When He said, therefore, that He came not to destroy the law, and that it was easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail, He must have been thinking chiefly of the moral law, especially since He followed this statement by taking several of the moral laws, and exacting a still higher level of conduct as obedience to them. Matt. 5:21, ". . . .Ye have heard it was said . . . .Thou shalt

not kill. . . .But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his father without cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." Later he sums up the whole matter by giving the law of love, to God and to one's neighbour. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Now the details of the ceremonial and judicial laws could never be discovered by following the law of love alone, so it is reasonable to suppose that Jesus considered the moral law the one of most importance.

Paul, a little later, defines the position more clearly. He seems to have reached this conclusion regarding the laws only after much thought and inward struggle. He had himself kept the law faithfully in his youth (Acts 22:3; 26:5; Phi. 3:5); he had been a good Jew; and yet after he was converted he saw how far he had been from true knowledge of God, although in strict obedience to the law. He saw also how those Gentiles who had not the law were living more in accordance with Christ's teachings than some Jews who knew and kept the law (Rom. 2:14). He saw that he could not have been redeemed even though living in accordance with the law, and yet these Gentiles were likely to be redeemed (Col. 3:11) without it. Evid-

ently then, there was something more important for salvation than the law itself; this belief gave rise to his emphasis on faith, love and charity (Rom. 3:27, 28 4:15, 16; Gal. 3:24; 6:2; Rom. 13:8, 9; I Tim. 1:5; Gal. 5:14; Heb. 13:1, 2; etc.) This emphasis on faith rather than on works tended naturally to subordinate the ceremonial law which was purely a law of works, and we find it definitely stated by the apostles that conformance to the ceremonial law was no longer necessary (Acts 15:10; Eph. 2:15; Gal. 5:6; 3:24) This did not mean the whole law, however, and Paul insists that the moral bond still exists and shows in much the same way as Jesus had done that it may be obeyed under the guidance of love: Rom. 13:9, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment it is briefly comprehended in this saying. . . .Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self." The Spirit of God, he felt would direct the believer to obedience to the divine will, more surely then the letter of the law: Rom. 8:2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

In Milton's time, the general belief was that Christians are still bound to the moral law but freed from the ceremonial and judicial. The Decalogue was part of the church of England catechism, and the conclusion of Westminster Assembly on the matter was briefly this: "All. . . .ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament. . . .(the)judicial laws. . . .expired together with the state of that people. . . .The moral law doth for ever bind all" (Westminster Confession, Chap XIX).

Now in the Anti-episcopal tracts, we have seen Milton discarding the ceremonial law entirely, insisting that if we persist in trying to imitate its ceremonies we are in danger of running into the same errors as the papists "who by this very snare and pitfall of imita ing the ceremonial law, fell into that irrecoverable superstition; as must needs make void the covenant of Salvation to them that persist in this blindness." (Reason of Church Government). The Gospel has called us to freedom, and given us a new religion of love and faith, we are as sons of God under the Gospel, while under the law we were as children: "How to breed and bring up the children of promise, the heirs of liberty and grace, under such

a kind of government as is professed to be but an imitation of that ministry which engendered to bondage the sons of Agar; how can this be but a foul injury and derogation, if not a cancelling of that birthright and immunity which Christ hath purchased for us with his blood?"

"God," states the Westminster Confession, "was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws." And in the Apology, Milton uses very similar words and sentiment. "Besides that it was then the time, whenas the best of them, as St. Paul saith, "was shut up unto the faith under the law, their school master." Who was forced to entice them as children with childish enticements. But the gospel is our manhood, and the ministry should be the manhood of the gospel. . . ."

However, when Milton came to write his divorce tracts, he was in a position where it was necessary to insist upon the retention of judicial as well as the moral law, and so we find him insisting that "the law, not only the moral, but the judicial given by Moses is just and pure; for such is God who gave it." and insisting that Christ did not come to destroy the old laws or make new. The importance of the laws

of Moses, not mentioning, of course, the ceremonial laws, he plays to the full all through these writings. Speaking of Deut. 24:1, 2, "This being every way a law of God, who can without blasphemy doubt it to be a just and pure law? Moses continually disavows the giving them any statute, or judgment, but what he learnt of God." (Tetrachordon p. 340, v.3)

He also makes the most of the words of Christ that he came "not to destroy the law," and "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." God, he maintains, never gave that which was not just and good, and if so once, why not now.

The anonymous opponent to Milton's divorce tracts has made the statement "that the gospel counts unlawful what the law allowed", instancing circumcision, washings, sacrifices. And Milton's reply is. "But what are these ceremonial things, to the changing of a moral point in household duty, equally belonging to Jew and Gentile?" At this time, then, he quite emphatically would not consider that the gospel had abrogated any point of the moral law, since it concerned both Jew and Gentile.

But, when Milton wrote his Christian Doctrine in

1755 -60, he was beginning to insist more and more on complete liberty of thought, and on the right of individual judgment in every circumstance. He still insists that God would never have made a law which was not just and good; and that the law was never a dispensation permitting wrong: "how preposterously they interpret the law who hold that usury, divorce, polygamy, and their like, were conceded to the hard-heartedness of the Jews as venial infirmities, or as evils which were to be abated or regulated by law; whereas the law can no more concede or tolerate the smallest degree of moral evil, than a good man can voluntarily choose it." (C. D. v. 11, p. 14). And in his definition of the law, we feel that he is going to follow orthodox Presbyterianism, so nearly alike in tone and sentiment is the wording. This is the Westminster Confession: "Although true believers be not under the law. . . .yet it is of great use to them. . . .discovering. . . .the sinful pollutions of their nature, heart and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ,

and the perfection of his obedience." (Chap. 19,6) Now hear Milton's definition: "The Mosaic law was a written code. . . .intended for the Israelites alone . . . .to the end that they, being led thereby to an acknowledgment of the depravity of mankind. . . .and that they, and in the progress of time all other nations, might be led under the gospel from the weak and servile rudiments of this elementary institution in the full strength of the new creature, and a manly liberty worthy the sons of God. (C. D. v. 1, p. 379)

However, the definition over, Milton departs at once from the orthodox stand. In his system, the whole law must go, ceremonial, judicial and moral. It was made for the Jews and as such is not binding on us: "On the introduction of the gospel, or new covenant through faith in Christ, the whole of the preceding covenant, in other words, the entire Mosaic law, was abolished." (C. D. v. 1, p. 387)

In support of this opinion he gives various passages of scripture which speak of the abolition of the law; a number of which it may be well to consider in order to see how they support his position.

Acts 15:10, "now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" But, it seems to me, this verse should not be taken as abolishing the whole law; for it was the result only of the question regarding circumcision of the believers among the Gentiles, and so was concerned only with the ceremonial law. Gal. 4:4, "but when the fulness of time was come God sent forth his Son,. .them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." This looks like a genuine support for his position, until a little further in the chapter, and Paul asks them why they, being sons, turn again to the weak and beggarly elements of bondage, and observe days, months, times and years. Since this observance was connected with the ceremonial law only, it seems as if Paul had been speaking of the freedom of their adoption as freedom from this part of the law in particular. Rom. 14:20, "All things indeed are pure." Titus 1:15, " unto the pure all things are pure; but unto men that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Such verses are easily understood as related to the ceremonial law, and the distinction between clean

and unclean, but it is hard to see how they serve to abrogate the moral law, as Milton would believe they do. Luke 16:16, "the law and the prophets were until John," a glance at the next verse however, makes us feel that we are not to take this as an abrogation of the whole law: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail." A glance at two other places in the Bible where the words 'until' and 'to' are used may give us a better understanding of how this verse is to be understood. Ps. 110:1, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool," We are not to understand here, however, that after that, the Son would no longer sit at God's righthand. So also in Isaiah 46:4, "And even to your old age I am he." the meaning certainly is not that after the old age of the ones addressed, God would cease to be. In the same way we may argue that the words "the law and the prophets were until John," do not necessitate the belief that after that, the law would cease, and lose its force. ✱

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✱ I am indebted for this argument to the Douay Version of the Holy Bible where it is used in connection with Matt. 1:25.

However, Milton finds many passages which give more reliable support to his position: Rom. 3:21, "now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." 6:14, "ye are not under the law but under grace." Rom. 7:6, "now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." II Cor. 5:17, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." etc.

He then gives altogether seven major reasons and several minor considerations to prove that if part of the law goes all must go: "The law is abolished principally on the ground of its being a law of works; that it might give place to the law of grace, Rom. 3:27; 11:6, Now the law of works was not solely the ceremonial law, but the whole law. . . .The law of which it was written "the man that doeth them shall live in them," Gal. 3:12; Lev. 18:5; and "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10, was the whole law. From "the curse of this law Christ hath redeemed us." ver. 13, inasmuch as we were unable to fulfil it ourselves.

Now to fulfil the ceremonial law could not have been a matter of difficulty; it must therefore have been the entire Mosaic law from which Christ delivered us. Again, as it was against those who did not fulfil the whole law that the curse was denounced, it follows that Christ could not have redeemed us from that curse, unless he had abrogated the whole law; if therefore he abrogated the whole, no part of it can be now binding upon us." (p. 390, C. D. v. 1)

It is hard to agree with Milton here, first in that it could not have been a matter of difficulty to keep the ceremonial law, which was most rigid and exacting even to details. Again it is hard to believe that God would absolve us from the moral law simply because the fulfilling of it is a matter of difficulty. Such an interpretation runs us very near the suggestion which arouses such indignation in Milton in the divorce, that is: that God would permit sin, because some of the more rigid laws were too hard to enforce. Also the suggestion that God absolved Christians from the whole law, because the keeping of it was a matter of such difficulty does not coincide well with Milton's later argument that the law may be better kept by the spirit than by the letter; if it is a matter of keep-

ing the law well, then the difficulty of conforming to it should not be a reason for its abrogation.

It is said in II Cor. 3:7, that the law "written and engraven in stones" was the "ministration of death," and therefore "was done away" -- and it was not the ceremonial law only but the whole law that was engraved on the stone, Various other passages such as Rom. 8:2, 7:5; etc., Milton quotes and insists that if they are applicable to the ceremonial law they must be applied to the whole law, because there is no distinction made in the writing of the New Testament. And finally from such passages as Gal. 3:10, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, etc.," he argues that to be true children of promise we must free ouselves from the bondage of the law, not the ceremonial law only but the whole law, for 'all things which are written in the law,' and not the things of the ceremonial law alone, render us obnoxious to the curse"; concluding his argument. "it would be been ridiculous to attempt to observe that which is of no avail unless it be fulfilled in every part, and which nevertheless it is impossible for man so to fulfil; especially as it has been superseded by

the more excellent law of faith, which God in Christ has given us both will and power to fulfil."

His position once settled, and the conviction arrived at that the whole law should be abolished, Milton never wavered or changed his mind. In 1659, in The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church, he writes: ". . .and what they vouch is founded on the law of Moses, with which, everywhere pitifully mistaken, they again incorporate the gospel . . . ." (p.17)

Later in Paradise Lost, almost the same attitude is shown, now clothed in poetry:

> . . . . . peace
> Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies
> Cannot appease, nor man the moral part
> Perform, and not performing cannot live.
> So law appears imperfect, and but given
> With purpose to resign them, in full time,
> Up to a better covenant, disciplined
> From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit,
> From imposition of strict laws to free
> Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear
> To filial, works of law to works of faith.
> P.L. Bk. XII, l. 290

And again,

> But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
> The law that is against thee, and the sins
> Of all mankind, with him there crucified.
> P.L. Bk. XII, l. 415

Now, the question remains, why did Milton take this attitude and insist upon a complete abrogation

of the whole Mosaic law. Why was he so determined that the whole law should abolished, especially in the face of Christ's explicit statement that He came "not to destroy the law, or the prophets," (Matt. 5:17) and that whosoever should "break one of these least commandments," and "teach men so," he should be called "the least in the kingdom of heaven:" but whosoever should do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." One would expect Milton to place more reliance on these words of Christ himself than on the epistles of his followers who wrote after his death.

We may find several reasons for this stand of Milton's. First, it was part of the campaign of his whole life to establish freedom, liberty of thought; and a system of restraints and restrictions as enumerated in the Mosaic Law must have been irksome indeed to one who believed as he did, in the ability of each man to judge for himself and to choose between good and evil by the light which God has placed within us as a guide. This belief that it was in the nature of man to be able to judge and decide for himself shows itself all through his works, and is found as early as 1634 when Comus was written.

> Virtue could see to do what virtue would
> By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
> Were in the flat sea sunk.
> (l. 373)

And this conviction becomes more and more firmly established, as the years progress, more and more the foundation of his whole philosophy. Man becomes more free, more independent, self-sufficient as Milton grows older. The law of nature becomes more and more predominant: ". . .therefore not bound by any statute of preceding parliament, but by the law of nature only which is the only law of laws truly and properly to all mankind fundamental; the beginning and the end of all government; to which no parliament or people that will thoroughly reform, but may and must have recourse, ..." (The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, 1659, p.111) and a year later: "If we hear mooting and law lectures from the pulpit, what shame is it for a doctor of divinity not first to consider, that no law can be fundamental, but that which is grounded on the light of nature or right reason, commonly called moral law: . . . ." (Brief notes on Dr. Griffith's Sermon 1660. p. 359)

It is not surprising, after all, then, that Milton should have taken this stand, constituting as it did

a part of his campaign for liberty; and expressing his proud, independent, conviction that every man should be his own judge in each and every department of life. Reason also played its part in the final decision . The ceremonial law he had early decided was to be discarded: this part of the law was of course, out of harmony with his attitude, for it savoured of superstition, and superstition was to Milton simply a brand of tyranny to be opposed wherever it appeared; also it constituted a law of works, and Milton was a strong advocate of justification by faith. But his abrogation could not stay there; he followed his argument to its logical conclusion, and insisted that if one part of the law was abrogated all must go. The reasons that hold for the ceremonial and judicial may also be applied to the moral. As in so many of his problems, the final result is reached by using the rule of liberty and the light of reason.

VII

OF THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH

This is a question upon which Milton's various opinions and changes of mind are recorded in his work, from his earliest years, until almost the end of his life. It is a problem that recurs again and again, and it is one of the most difficult of all for him to settle finally. We first see him facing this question as early as 1625 - 6 in the elegy on the death of his sister's child, and appropriately enough, our introduction to the discussion is the form of a question:

> Tell me, bright Spirit, where'er thou hoverest
> Whether above that high first-moving sphere,
> Or in the Elysian fields (if such there were),
> Oh, say me true if thou wert mortal wight
> (ll. 36 - 39)

Then comes the expression of the belief that the child has gone straight to God, and is in the realms of the blessed.

> But oh! why didst thou not stay here below
> . . . . . .
> To stand betwixt us and our deserved smart?
> But thou canst best perform that office where
> thou art.
> (ll. 64 - 70)

Then to the child's mother:

> Think what a present thou to God hast sent,
> And render him with patience what he lent:
> (ll. 74 - 75)

His elegy on the death of Dr. Andrews in the same year, describes the bishop as seen in a vision, walking with hosts of angels round him, each angel saluting "his new comrade with embrace and song," and God saying these words: "Come, son, enjoy the gladness of thy father's realm; rest henceforth from thy hard labours." Evidently Dr. Andrews has gone on to the next world, been judged found worthy, and been established in the abode of the righteous.

As early as 1625 - 6 we saw him doubtful as to the locality of the soul after death; and in 1629 we find his first doubt as to the time when the soul will awake. In the Hymn in On The Morning of Christ's Nativity, he suggests the thought that the soul of the dead must sleep until the day of judgment.

> Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
> The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep (l. 155-6)

However, in 1631, he has returned to his original conception of the soul going at once to heaven, and in the epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester he pictures her as already in heaven in company with Rachel, the wife of Jacob:

> While thou, bright Saint, high sitt'est in glory,
> Next her, much like to thee in story,
> That fair Syrian Shepherdess

Who. . . . . .
Through pangs fled to felicity,
Far within the bosom bright
Of blazing Majesty and Light:
There with thee, new-welcome Saint,
Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,
With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
No Marchioness, but now a Queen.
(ll. 60 - 74)

The question, nevertheless, was not to be dismissed without much more discussion; even at this time there were probably some puzzling problems stirring in his mind. Why should the soul or spirit go on to heaven and the body be left in the grave, when surely the soul had had as much part in the sin as the body, perhaps more; granting that it had not had as much share in the sin as had the body, then it could not have more share in the righteousness either, but yet it was considered as sent to heaven while the body lay in the grave. The whole question is still a mystery to Milton and, in 1633, when he wrote Il Penseroso it was one of the problems he would have wished solved in his ideal life of speculation; one finds here almost a suggestion of a Limbo where the soul may dwell while awaiting final judgment:

Where I may. . . . . .
. . . . . .unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook

Her mansion in this fleshy nook.
(ll. 87 - 92)

In 1633 - 4, he returned to his thought of 1629 that the soul only arrives in heaven at the last day when Time has her "greedy Self consumed."

. . . . to whose happy-making sight alone
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,
Then, all this earthly grossness quit,
Attired with stars we shall forever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and Thee,
O Time!
(On Time, ll. 18 - 22)

However, a little later, we find Milton bringing forward still another theory, one to which he gives expression only once in his many discussions of this problem. In 1634, in Cosmus, the elder brother conceives of the soul as able to leave the body if it would, but unwilling to do so:

Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensuality
To a degenerate and degraded state.
(470 - 5)

Four years later, in Lycidas, we find again the theory, the only one which he expresses from now on until the composition of the Christian Doctrine, that the soul of the departed is separated from the body, and goes at once to its final reward.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
. . . . . .
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other graves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves.
. . . . . .
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies.
(165 - 179)

The same opinion holds in his poetic letter to Manso, which he wrote some time between 1638 - 40. He considers himself as having died, and receiving the reward of a virtuous life is being accepted into heaven; meanwhile his patron is pictured as on earth caring for his body. "...He will place my limbs loosened in death softly in their humble grave... Then...I shall stand among the ethereal deities in Paradise, wither labor, and a pure mind, ... carry the souls of men: from some corner of the secret world, ...I shall look down and behold all this; My soul shall smile. ...and glad at heart I shall clap my hands in the air of heaven." * (89 - 100)

Clearly, here he considers that the soul goes

.....

* Mr. Moody's translation.

to the next world before the end of this one, because it can look down upon the activities of men: "He will place my limbs, . . .softly in their humble grave; and perhaps he will carve my face in marble, ... I shall look down and behold all this." Also the soul has definitely separated from the body, because it is able to look down on care given to the body by friends on earth.

On the Death of Damon, written in 1640, in memory of his very dear friend Charles Diodati, he gives expression to the same thought: "Go hence, lamentation! Damon the pure dwells in skies of purity. Beneath his feet he has spurned the rainbow. Among hero-souls and deathless divinities he drinks the draft of Paradise; he sips joy with his sacred lips. Now that thou possessest the rights of Heaven, O my friend, stand at my right hand, show me thy gentle favor, however I call upon thee. " ✱ (203 - 8)

And so it was, in 1646, when he wrote an elegy on the death of Mrs. Catherine Thompson,

> When Faith and Love, ...
> Had ripened thy just soul to live with God,
>
> .....

✱ Mr. Moody's Translation.

> Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
> Of death called life. . . . . .
> Thy works and alms, and all thy good endeavour,
> Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
> But. . . . . .
> Followed thee up to joy and bliss forever.
> . . . . . .
> And speak the truth of thee on glorious themes
> Before the Judge; who henceforth bid thee rest,
> And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.
> (1 - 14)

Soon after this, Milton's time was occupied with protests against the tyranny of an unjust king, answers to advocates of the divine right kings, and the composition of many Latin letters of state, and for almost ten years we have no new material on this question except for a hint given in the Defence of the English People in 1651, which, if it may be taken as an expression of his serious opinion, shows him still continuing in the belief that the soul goes at once to the next world: ". . .but that same fate attends you (Salmasius) that befell your equal (Judas), out of despair rather than repentance, to be weary of your life, and hang yourself, ...and to send beforehand that faithless and treacherous conscienceof yours, ...to that place of torment that is prepared for you." (p. 261)

The belief that the soul separates from the body and goes at once to its final resting place was

of course the orthodox conclusion and is given very definite expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith, first completed in 1646: "The bodies of men a return to dust after death, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness reserved for the judgment of the great day.

"At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever." Also, this opinion has very good support in the Bible, in such passages as the following: Ecc. 12:7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Luke 16:22, 23, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died and was carried by the angel of God into Abraham's bosom: the rich

man also died, an was buried ; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off. . ." Luke, 23:43, "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." and in Philippians 1:23, where Paul speaks of "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

So, if Milton wanted Biblical support alone he could have retained the attitude that seems to have appealed to him so strongly. However, by the time he wrote the Christian Doctrine he had accepted exactly the opposite conclusion and the discussion there opens with this statement, a surprising one in view of his poetic views on the subject during the previous thirty or more years: "The death of the body is the loss or extinction of life. The common definition, which supposes it to consist in the separation of soul and body is inadmissable. For what part of man is it that dies when this separation takes place? Is it the soul? This will never be admitted by the supporters of the above definition. Is it then the body? But how can that be said to die which never had any life of itself? Therefore the separation of soul and body cannot be called the death of man."

"Inasmuch. . . . as the whole man is uniformly said to consist of body, spirit and soul. . . .I shall first shew that the whole man dies, and secondly, that each component part suffers privation of life. It is to be observed first of all, that God denounced the punishment of death against the whole man that sinned, without excepting any part. For what could be more absurd than that the mind, which is the part principally offending, should escape treatened death, and that the body alone, to which immortality was equally alloted, before death came into the world by sin, should pay the penalty of sin by undergoing death, though not implicated in the transgression?" (p. 271)

Milton then proceeds to quote passages from the Old and New Testaments to show that patriarchs, prophets and apostles thought as he did, such as: Gen. 37:35, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Ps. 6:5, "in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Isaiah 38: 18, 19, "for the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth: the living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day."

Acts 7:60, "when he had said thid, he fell asleep." Ps. 39:13, "Before I go hence, and be no more," 146:2 "while I live will I praise Jehovah." "Certainly," writes Milton, "if he had believed that the soul would survive, and be received immediately into heaven, he would have abstained from all such remonstrances, as one who was shortly to take his flight where he might praise God unceasingly." Dan. 12:2, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." . . . ."He (Christ) declares expressly, that there is not even a place appointed for the abode of the saints in heaven, till the resurrection, John 14:2,3 'I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.' There is no sufficient reason for interpreting this of the body; it is clear therefore, that it was spoken and should be understood, of the reception of the soul and spirit conjointly with the body into heaven, and that not until the coming of the Lord. . . ." "Paul himself affirms that the crown of righteousness which was laid up for him was not to be received before that last day. II Tim. 4:8 'henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord

... . .shall give me at that day, and not to me only to all them also that love his appearing." If a crown were laid up for the apostle, it follows that it was not to be received immediately after death. At the same time when it was to be conferred on the rest of the saints, that is, not till the appearance of Christ in glory." (C. D. v. 1, p. 272-3)

As usual, after supporting his own position with Biblical passages, Milton takes passages used as supports for the opposite conclusion and interprets them either to reveal their weaknesses or to show their strength for his own theory.

Ps. 49:15 "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave." This he dismisses briefly and, it appears, adequately in a few words: "But this proves rather that the soul enters the grave with the body . . . .from whence it needs to be redeemed. (p. 277-8)

Ecc. 12:7, "the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." But, Milton argues, neither does this prove the position of the other side, for the phrase "the spirit returning to God" must be understood with considerable latitude, since the wicked do not return to God at death but depart from him." This is rather a good point for his argument, but the rest of

his treatment of this passage seems less successful: "The preacher had moreover" he continues, "said before, 3:20, 'all go unto one place;' and God is said both to have given, and to gather unto himself the spirit of every living thing, whilst the body returns to dust. Job 34:14, 15. . . .That is, every constituent part returns at dissolution to its elementary principle. This is confirmed by Ezek. 37:9 "come from the four winds, O breath;" it is certain therefore that the spirit of man must have previously departed thither from whence it is now summoned to return" (p.278-9) Milton here is thinking probably of the spirit as the breath rather than as the eternal soul, but at the same time his discussion of the separation of the constituent parts into the elemtary principles seems rather to support the argument of his opponents,—that the soul and body undergo separation at death.

Matt. 10:28, "fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul." "It may be answered," Milton writes, "that properly speaking, the body cannot be killed, as being in itself a thing inanimate; the body therefore as is common in scripture, must be taken for the whole human compound, or

for the animal and temporal life; the soul for that spiritual life with which we shall be clothed after the end of the world." This seems a very reasonable and sane interpretation of the passage and quite in harmony with the spirit of the text.

Philip. 1:23, "having a desire to depart and to be with Christ." To explain this, Milton likens Paul to one starting on a journey, who is anxious to set sail, have the journey over and arrive at his objective. Such a one, he argues, has no thought of the time which must elapse between one point and the other. "If, . . .it be true that there is no time without motion, which Aristotle illustrates by the example of those who were fabled to have slept in the temple of the heroes, and who on awaking, imagined that the moment in which they awoke had succeeded without an interval to that in which they fell asleep, how much more must intervening time be annihilated to the departed, so that to them to die and to be with Christ will seem to take place at the same moment?" (p. 200) This rather ingenious argument is hard to dispute, particularly since no one can say positively just what interpretation Paul himself would wish us to put on his words, but Milton's argument never-

theless seems not convincing. It is hard to imagine that the apostle when he spoke of being with Christ, had any thought of a long interval in the grave before he would be with his Master; however, it may be argued that Paul could have agreed with Milton and still not have anticipated a long wait in the grave, for it was generally thought at that time that the end of the world and the final resurrection was near at hand.

I Pet. 3:9, "by which also he went and preached to the spirits that are in prison," "Literally, in guard," Milton writes, "or. . . .in the grave, which means the same; for the grave is the common guardian of all till the day of judgment. What therefore the apostle says more fully 4:5, 6 'who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead; for, for this cause was the gospel preached also unto them that are dead," he expresses in this place by a metaphor, "the spirits that are in guard;" it follows, therefore, that the spirits are dead." Unless we are willing to accept his belief that prison or guard means the same as grave, this explanation is unconvincing; and even if we are, it still seems unreasonable that Christ should preach to those who, in the grave, were dead,

body, spirit, and soul as Milton would have us believe they were.

Now to come to the last opposing passage, one which constitutes a real difficulty for Milton's position: Luke 23:43, "Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto you, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'" This passage he explains together with Matthew 27:52, 53, "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the Saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many," Milton admits that of these two passages it is not possible to give a very satisfactory explanation but deals with them as follows: "That spiritual state in which the souls as well as the bodies of the arising saints previously abode might not improperly be called paradise; and it is this state, as appears to me, that the penitent thief was united to the other saints without polluting them by his company. Nor is it necessary to take the word today in too strict acceptance,

but rather for a short time." (C.D. p. 282) This is, however, rather a strained use of the word 'to-day' no matter how one regards it; and his interpretation also has to make providion for a new abode for man after death, namely paradise, not elsewhere recognized in this discussion.* However he himself admits that it is not easy to give an adequate explanation of this passage; and argues that other satisfactory support for his position should not be rejected because of this one passage alone.

Now that he has set forth and established to his satisfaction his deliberate and considered opinion on this question, before going on to see with what consistency he will maintain this stand throughout his later work, it may be well to pause for a moment, and consider the reason, or reasons, lying behind the acceptance or formulation of this theory, which he insists upon with such emphasis in this work, quite ignoring all his previous poetical discussions on the same topic.

* Paradise is not to be confused with the Limbo suggested elsewhere, for Paradise was the abode of the departed saints alone, and this is not true of his Limbo.

Now, what influenced Milton in the Christian Doctrine to give up the opinion held with almost unfailing consistence for thirty years or more, that the soul and body separated at death? In his earlier work, we find more than once, questions as to the final abode of the departed soul, but the thought of the separation of soul and body hardly appears at all until the Christian Doctrine in the late sixteen fifties, and there it is held with most emphatic insistence.

The first reason is one based on principles of justice alone: it was not reasonable or just to suppose that the soul would be allotted its final reward or punishment while the body slept in the grave, with no share in either until the last day. If the opponents would argue that the body was more sinful than the soul, the answer would be: why was it not sent then, to everlasting perdition when it was the soul of a wicked person? And if not more wicked than the soul, why was it deprived of its share of the glory in heaven when it was the soul of a righteous being?

Another reason for Milton's later position is to be found in his conception of matter. His conviction that matter was eternal and divine, and that body and soul came from the same orig onal source led him to the belief that the two were unseparably joined. The

union was not a temporary artificial one to be dissolved at death; but indeed, the soul itself was propagated with the purely physical part of man, and was passed on from one generation to another. "It would seem, therefore, that the human soul is not created daily by the immediate act of God, but propagated from father to son in a natural order;....God would in fact have left his creation imperfect and a vast, not to say servile task would yet remain to be performed, without even allowing time for rest in each successive Sabbath; if he still continued to create as many souls daily as there are bodies multiplied throughout the whole world, at the bidding of what is not seldom the flagitious wantonness of man." (p. 189-190) If the soul is not made by God for each individual body and given to it at birth, it seems more easy to imagine the perpetual association of soul and body, and less easy to conceive of the soul as leaving the body at death.

And there is still another reason why Milton could not accept the idea that the soul went straight to final glory or perdition immediately after death. Simply this: at the day of judgment after the deeds of men have been read out of the book of life, the souls of the righteous and the wicked will be allotted

their respective places of everlasting glory or perdition. But before that day, no soul can properly be conceived as inhabiting either region, because before the judgment takes place it can not be known to which place they are finally destined.

And so he has declared his position at last, and we know that in his philosophy the soul and the body slept together till the end. But our material on the question is still not exhausted; and discussions on this same problem recur in his later poetical writings.

We have noticed all through that where Milton is writing an epitaph he consistently speaks of the soul as having gone already to heaven, and enjoying perfect bliss with God; but now he has another epitaph to write, even while the Christian Doctrine is in the process of composition. In 1658, when his second wife died, this chapter on the death of the body must either have been written, or the material for it must have been forming and ordering itself in Milton's mind. How will he write his epitaph? After having spoken of Lycidas as "mounted high", of Mrs. Thompson as drinking her fill of "pure immortal streams", of the Marchioness of Winchester as a "new-welcome Saint," it would seem hard to have to write of his wife sleeping in the grave and waiting the day of judgment before

she would have her place allotted in the next world. He handles the poem very skilfully, however, and does not commit himself. He saw his late "espoused saint," come "vested all in white, pure as her mind;" he refrains from saying from where she came, from the grave or from Heaven, but one thinks he had the grave in mind, for she was brought "like Alcestis from the grave;" he says, however, that she came, "such as yet once more I trust to have full sight of her in Heaven without restraint." And so the elegy is written, perhaps the most beautiful of all, and yet perhaps the most difficult to write, when the picture of the soul in Heaven cannot be used.

Perhaps, however, the thought of long years of sleep in the grave was repulsive to Milton, perhaps the thought of his friends sleeping, sleeping through interminable years, was oppressive to his mind. At all events, he seems, even in his early years, to have favoured the thought of a Limbo, where the departed might spend the time of waiting for judgment. We have noticed the suggestion of this solution in Il Penserso; now the same theory is brought forward in Paradise Lost, in the third book, where he describes the Limbo which is to receive a certain particular portion of mankind. To this Limbo travel

"all the unaccomplished works of Natures work,"

and there they wander "till final dissolution:"

> They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
> . . . . . .
> And now Saint Peter at Heaven's wicket seems
> To wait them with his keep, and now at foot
> Of heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo!
> A violent cross wind from either coast
> Blows them transverse, ...
> Into the devious air. . . . . (Book 3..L. 481.)

Two more references on the same subject appear in Book 3 of Paradise Lost, and both are consistent with his theory as set forth in the Christian Doctrine.

> While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes -
> Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave;
> Then, with the multitude of my redeemed,
> Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
> Father, to see Thy face, ...(Book 3..L. 258.)

This passage may at first seem a little doubtful, but I take it as consistent with Milton's later theory; and that the Son is not speaking of his return to the Father after his own resurrection, but of his return after the final judgment, because it is only then that death can properly be said to be vanquished, when the first heaven and the first earth are passed away, and there shall be no more death. (Rev. 21.)

The second passage is more clearly in accord with his theory: the dead of all ages rise at the call, and come forth to be judged. This is, very briefly, his position of The Christian Doctrine clothed in poetry.

> The living, and forthwith the cited dead
> Of all past ages, to the general doom
> Shall hasten, such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
> Then, all thy Saints assembled, thou shalt judge
> Bad men and Angels; . . . . . (Book 3..L. 327)

No matter how convincingly and to his own satisfaction he might settle it on paper, this question still bothered him, and towards the end of Paradise Lost, we find a doubt troubling his mind still. A doubt this was, more serious and disturbing than any of the previous questions on this subject: What if the spirit which he had convinced himself as inseparably joined to the body, should not be able to die? It is easy to conceive of matter as dying, we ourselves have seen it in process of decay time and again; but spirit— that is different, can it die and still be spirit? Is not the death of spirit itself a species of contradiction?

> . . . . . Yet one doubt
> Pursues me still . . lest all I cannot die;
> Lest that pure breath of life, the Spirit of Man
> Which God inspired, cannot together perish
> With this corporeal clod. Then, in the grave,
> Or in some other dismal place, who knows
> But I shall die a living death? O thought
> Horrid if true. . . . . (Book 10..L. 782)

Milton finds himself an answer and solves the question as far as human reach can go, but it seems to me not satisfactorily. For his doubt was caused by the thought that it was against the nature of the spirit to be able to undergo death. And the answer

to be satisfactory should show that spirit, by its nature, can undergo death. But his answer is that it was the spirit that sinned: and the spirit that in justice should receive the punishment, therefore the spirit will die:

> . . . . . O thought
> Horrid if true! Yet why? It was but breath
> Of life that sinned: what dies but what had life
> And sin? The body properly hath neither.
> All of me, then, shall die: . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . How can he exercise
> Wrath without end on Man, whom death must end?
> (Book 10..L. 788)

Perhaps he felt that this was an unsatisfactory answer, for he concludes, "Let this appease the doubt, since human reach no further knows." And here the question closes.

VIII

THE TRINITY

The doctrine of Trinity was, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one on which the public mind was exceedingly intolerant and uncompromising. In the latter half of the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth, there was a steady though thin stream of anti-Trinitarians either executed or saved through recantation. Dating from the accession of Queen Elizabeth, those actually burned were eight in number, the last of whom, in 1612, were Bartholemew Legate, who insisted that Christ was a "mere man", although "born free from sin", and Edward Wightman, the half-fanatic, who recanted at the repoach of death, but repented soon afterwards and was sent to the stake in April, 1612. Although there were no more executions after this date it was still far from safe to deny the doctrine of Trinity. Paul Best and John Biddle, the latter of whom is now frequently called the father of English Unitarianism, would have lost their lives after the ordinance of 1648 which made denial of the Trinity punishable by death, had not Cromwell intervened in both cases. Although they

escaped the actual death sentence, Biddle, by his open denial of the doctrine of the doctrine of Trinity was kept either in prison, on bail or in exile for the rest of his life, and it was in prison that he died in 1662.

So we see that in Milton's time it was not safe to express any view on this question but the orthodox one, which is set forth in the following passages from the Church of England Articles as agreed upon in 1562 and ratified on 1571, and from the Westminster Confessions of Faith as approved in 1649

"There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one Substance, power and eternity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

"The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature. . . ."

(Articles 1 & 2 of the Church of England)

"In the unity of Godhead there be three persons,

of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

(Westminster Confession, Chap. 2:3.)

In the first of his life Milton seems to have taken the doctrine of the Trinity more or less for granted -- he nowhere sets it forth as a positive belief, but in many incidental passages he shows that he does not question its truth. In his Ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity", written in 1629 he speaks of the Son sitting in "the midst of Triunal Unity" and in 1641 in the Reformation in England he speaks slightingly of the Arians and Pelagians whom he considers "no true friends of Christ," though "slain by the heathen for Christ's sake." Later in the same work he addresses his prayer to the Trinity: "Thou therefore that sittest in light and glory unapproachable, parent of angels and men! next thee I implore, omnipotent King, Redeemer of that lost remnant whose nature thou didst assume, ineffable and everlasting Love! and thou, the third subsistence of divine infinitude, illumining Spirit, the joy and

solace of created things! one Tripersonal Godhead!" (p. 417)

In the same year, 1641, in writing of Prelatical Episcopacy he speaks as follows of Tertullian: "But suppose Tertullian had made an imparity where none was originally, should he move us, that goes about to prove an imparity between God the Father and God the Son. . .. ? . .Believe him now for a faithful relater of tradition whom ye see such an unfaithful expounder of the scripture." (p.433) And a few months later in the Animadversions, he again disparages the Arians: "lest the Arians and Pelagians in particular, should infect the people by their hymns and forms of prayer." (p. 57) Eight years later when he began his series of political writings he was apparently still orthodox in his views on Trinity. The following passage is from the Eikonoklastes written in 1649: "If then, ancient churches, to remedy the infirmities of prayer, or rather the infection of Arian and Pelagian heresies, ...betook them. . . .to liturgy, (their own invention) we are not to imitate them. (Eikonoklastes, p. 423)

These passages, scattered from 1629 to 1649 show

us at least that during this period, Milton did not question the orthodox opinion on this subject, and that he was ready even to consider as unfaithful expounders of the scriptures those who did so. Before turning to his detailed and elaborate discussion of this question in the Christian Doctrine, it may be well to consider a new influence that came into England shortly before the composition of Milton's theological treatise.

Socinianism, the great anti-Trinitarian movement led by Socinus, had been getting more and more prominence on the continent in the early seventeenth century, and the views of this sect were spreading into England so freely that in 1640, Canons 4 and 5 of the Convocation of Canterbury and York prohibited the publication or importation of any Socinian books; and decreed that any church member professing Socinian views should be excommunicated. This prohibition alone of Socinian books would have been sufficient to arouse Milton's antagonism and his interest; as we know from his Areopagitica, a plea for unlimited liberty of printing. We have no record of what Milton thought of this particular prohibition of

1640; but we do know this, that when Parliament, in 1651 - 2, ordered the public burning of a book containing a full exposition of Socinian beliefs -- the Racovian Catechism, -- Milton was somehow connected with it. For the committee appointed by Parliament to investigate the matter reported that the book contained an appalling number of the "principal blasphemous errors", and recommended the examination of John Milton, and of a "Note under the hand of Mr. John Milton of the 10th of August 1650." No more is known. But Masson suggests that the note may have been one to which the printer, Dugard, could refer as to a permission or recommendation to print the book, received from the Latin Secretary of State. Whatever his connection was, the book and the burning of it evidently must have been known to Milton, and when the resolution was passed ordering all copies of it to be publicly burned he must have been reminded of the days when his own writings on divorce had so nearly met the same fate. He may not have read it then, before it was burnt, but his interest in it must certainly have been aroused, and when The General Act of Olbivion in 1652 allowed the return of such books he probably lost no time in making himself familiar

with the doctrine of this one if he had not done so before. That this particular book returned under the freedom of the Act of Olbivion we know for certain, for in that same year 1652, John Biddle translated it, and in the next year translated the life of Socinus, the great leader of this anti-Trinitarian movement.

The Socinian beliefs which aroused such indignation in England are, briefly, as follows: God is One, the Absolute, Arbitrary One. "There cannot be more beings than one who possess supreme dominion over all things." The Son is a separate personality, subordinate, with power delegated from the one supreme God; but he may be called king because God has "placed him at his right hand and given him all power in heaven and on earth." The Divinity of Christ is denied: "by nature he was truly a man, a mortal man while he lived on earth but now immortal." And the Holy Spirit has a distinctly subordinate position, being described as: "a virtue or energy flowing from God to men, whereby he separates them from others, and consecrates them to his service." (Racovian Catechism)

All this, the prohibition, then the burning and finally the translation of Socinian books covered a period of time during which Milton proceeded from en-

thusiastic Presbyterianism to complete independence of thought and the composition of his own theological treatise. He had too independent a mind and was too great an advocate of the value of individual judgment to be very much influenced by the conclusions or doctrines of any person or persons, but at the same time the interest aroused at this time in the Socinian beliefs may have, if nothing more, given an impetus to the natural trend of his thought. At all events, though he is never a thorough-going Socinian in the Christian Doctrine he is at least a firm anti-Trinitarian.

Now to come to the Christian Doctrine itself. First, he argues that the Son is not co-essential with God: "But unless the terms unity and duality mean the same with God as with man, it would have been to no purpose that God had so repeatedly inculcated that first commandment, that he was the one and only God, if another could be said to exist besides, who also himself ought to be believed in as the one God. Unity and duality cannot consist of one and the same essence. God is one ens, not two; one essence and one subsistence. . . .if two subsistances or two persons be assigned to one essence, it in-

volves a contradiction of terms, by representing the essence as at once single and compound." ✱ (Christian Doctrine v. 1; p. 86)

Now this piece of reason has to be supported by the Bible, and Milton is ready with his support. The belief in God as the one and only God is emphasized throughout the Old and New Testaments, in such passages: "there is one God and there is none other one but he." "The Lord our God is one Lord." Milton observes: "For who can believe it possible for the very first (Deut. 6:4) of the commandments to have been so obscure, and so ill understood by the church through a succession of ages, that two other persons equally entitled to worship, should have remained wholly unknown to the people of God, and debarred of divine honours. . . . ?" (p. 88) The natural answer

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✱ "This indeed may be seen from hence that the essence of God is one, not in kind but in number. Wherefore it cannot in any way contain a plurality of persons, since a person is nothing else than an individual intelligent essence. Wherever, then, there exist three numerical persons, there must necessarily in like manner be reckoned three individual essences; for in the same sense in which it is affirmed that there is one numerical essence, it must be held that there is one numerical person. . . ." (Rac. Cat. Sect. 3)

here is that in the Old Testament where God was spoken of as one Lord, there was no thought of making a distinction between Unity and Trinity, but rather a distinction between the one God of the Hebrew religion and the plurality of gods of the Pagan religions. Also, the worship of God as one God would not have detracted from the honour due to the other two persons of the Trinity, for the three are understood as comprehended in the one Godhead,and worship given to God as One would be worship to all the persons in the Trinity.

Coming to the New Testament, Milton asserts that Christ teaches nothing regarding the one God than what the law had taught: John 17:3, "this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." 20:17, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." Paul, he says, teaches the same truth, I Cor. :4 - 6, "we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and there is none other God but one: for though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus

Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (p. 89)

Add to this, the Son as Christ, was seen on earth, "but no man hath seen God at any time." The Son is synonymous with the 'Word'. Therefore the word was audible. But God, as he cannot be seen, so neither can he be heard." John 5:37, "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his shape." Also, the will of the Father and the Son was not one; Matt. 17:39, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou will." Neither is the extent of their understanding the same: Matt. 24:36, "No man knoweth. . .. but my Father only." Mark 13:32, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels. . . neither the Son, but the Father." "Those therefore whose understanding and will are not numerically the same, cannot have the same essence." (101)

Also , Milton insists that the Son cannot be considered as co-eternal with the Father. Particularly he seems to have been antagonized by the words "eternally begotten", and "begotten from everlasting" in the Articles of The Church of England and in the Westminster Confession: "Him who was begotten from all Eternity the Father cannot have begotten, for

what was made from all Eternity was never in the act of being made; him whom the Father begat from all Eternity he still begets; he whom he still begets is not yet begotten, and therefore is not yet a son; for an action which has no beginning can have no completion." (p.131)

The next question is then, when and from what source did the Son originate? That he was begotten of the Father, Milton admits, not by physical necessity but rather by a divine decree, and within the limits of time. The very words "begotten of the Father" show that he is the Son and, therefore, different from the Father in rank and essence. "Now as the effect of generation is to produce something which shall exist independently of the generator, it follows that God cannot beget a co-equal Deity, because unity and infinity are two of his essential attributes. Since therefore the Son derives his essence from the Father, he is posterior to the Father not merely in rank. . . .but also in essence; and the filial character itself, on the strength of which they are chiefly wont to build his claim to supreme divinity, affords the best refutation of their

opinion." The supreme God, he argues, is self-existent; but the Son is not self- existent, He did not beget, but was begotten; therefore, He cannot be the first cause, but the effect; and therefore the Son is not the Supreme God. "Besides, since father and son are relative terms, distinguished from each other both in theory and in fact, and since according to the laws of contraries the father cannot be the son nor the son the father, if, (which is impossible from the nature of relation) they were one essence, it would follow that the father stood in a filial relation to the son, and the son in a paternal to relation to the father, -- a position, of the extravagance of which any rational being may judge." (p. 133)

He was begotten, then, by a divine decree of the Father, and derived his essence from the Father, and at some particular point of time before the world was made, but not from all eternity: "Thus the Son was begotten of the Father in consequence of his decree, and therefore within the limits of time, for the decree itself, must have been anterior to the execution of the decree, as is sufficiently clear from the insertion of the word 'today'. Nor can I discover on what passage of the Scripture the assertors

of the eternal generation of the Son ground their opinion." (p. 84) And it is true that all the passages which Milton takes, such as "from the beginning", "the first born", "the beginning of the creation of God", may be interpreted to mean from the beginning of a certain point in time, but not necessarily from all eternity. However, he does seem to have overlooked Heb. 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever". The words 'forever' certainly imply that the existence of Christ will have no end, and we have just heard Milton himself say that what has no beginning can have no completion; and so he would have to admit himself that what has no end, or what exists for ever can have had no beginning, and that this verse supports the belief that the Son existed from all eternity.

To proceed, there are a number of passages in Scripture which particularly seem to support the doctrine of Trinity, and these Milton proceeds to deal with:☆ "Scripture saith, and the Son saith 'I and my

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☆ In this discussion, as in the Chapter on Divorce, I have dealt with Miloth's inter retations at length, because it is these two questions particularly that his independence of thought shows forth most prominently, both in relation to the thought of his age, and to the interpretation of certain Biblical passages.

Father are one'. -- I bow to their authority. Certain commentators conjecture th t they are one in essence,-- I reject what is merely man's invention. For the Son has not left us to conjecture in what manner he is one with the Father, . . .but explains the doctrine himself most fully, so far as we are concerned to know it. The Father and the Son are one, not indeed in essence, for he himself said the contrary in the preceding verse, 'my Father which gave them me, is greater than all'. . . .and in the following verses he distinctly denies that he made himself God in saying, 'I am my Father are one;' he insists that he had only said as follows, which implies far less, ver. 36. "say ye of him whom the Father h th sanctified, and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God.'" This must be said of two persons not only not co-essential, but not co-equal. Now if the Son be laying a doctrine respecting the unity of the divine essence in two persons of the Trinity, how is it that he does not rather attribute the same unity of essence to the three persons? Why does he divide the indivisible Trinity? For there can be no unity without totality." (p. 93) They are rather, Milton argues, to be called one, "inasmuch as they speak and

act with unanimity," which seems, after all, a very reasonable and sane interpretation of the passage otherwise difficult to understand.

I John 5:7, "there are that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." Milton argues: "John. . . .is only speaking here. . . .of a unity of agreement and testimony. Besides, who are the three who are said to bear witness? That they are three Gods, will not be admitted; therefore neither is it the one God, but one record or one testimony of three witnesses which is implied. But he who is not co-essential with God the Father, cannot be co-equal with the Father." (p.95) His argument that the unity is one of agreement and testimony certainly seems supported by the verse immediately following: "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." Here the thought is almost parallel, and the unity is unquestionably one of testimony; and although it is not stated definitely so in the preceding verse, still the argument that the meaning is that of a unity of testimony gains significant weight by a comparison with the second passage.

1 John 3:16, "hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us". . . . "The pronoun 'he'", writes Milton, ". . .seems not to be referred to God, but to the Son of God. . . . 'The love of God', therefore, is the love of the Father, whereby he so loved the world, that he 'purchased it with his own blood', Acts 20:28, and for it 'laid down his life', that is, the life of his only begotten Son. . . .Nor is it extraordinary that by the phrase, 'his life' should be understood the life of his beloved Son, since we are ourselves in the habit of calling any much-loved friend by the title of life, or part of our life, as a term of endearment in familiar discourse." (p. 116, 117) Probably no one would criticize Milton's interpretation here of the word 'life', for it is quite frquently used to refer to another being who is as dear to one as one's own life. But what may be criticized is his arbitrary and inconsistent use of the words 'he' and 'his'. In the first place, he would make the pronoun 'he' refer to the Son; "The pronoun 'he'. . . seems not to be referred to God but to the Son of God," and the words 'his life' refer to the life of the Son; but immediately afterwards he makes God the

subject of the verb, while the words 'his life' still refer to the life of the Son: "the love of the Father, whereby he. . .'laid down his life', that is, the life of his only begotten Son." Either use of the pronoun 'he' makes quite a reasonable and understandable interpretation of the passage, but it is the use of them both in the same paragraph in regard to the same text that one objects to.

John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Milton remarks on the audibility of the Word, argues that God, as he cannot be seen, so he cannot be heard, and that therefore the Word cannot be said to be one in essence with God. However, the only argument which he finds to support his statement that God cannot be heard is John 5;37, and as far as I am aware, that is the only one there is in the Bible. The verse is: "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." But if Miltoncould argue in his divorce tracts that Christ intended in his speech only the Pharisees, a certain particular group of his autitors, then he could surely argue here, if he wished to, that Christ was speaking only to those who then heard him, or even to all men

then alive, but not necessarily to all men of all ages. We hear very often throughout the Bible that God cannot be seen, but that he cannot be heard is suggested, if it be so there, apparently in this one verse only; and indeed, in Deut 4:12, we have a record of God's invisibility together with a record of the fact that He might be heard: "ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice." To continue: 'The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Milton deals with these two clauses together and takes the second as dependent on the first; in this relation he discusses them at length. "'The Word was with God, and was God.' --namely because he was with God, that is, in the bosom of the Father, as it is expressed v. 18. Does it follow therefore that he is one in essence with him with whom he was? It no more follows, than that the disciple 'who was lying on Jesus breast', John 13:23, was one in essence with Christ. . . .'The same was in the beginning with God'; which enforces what the apostle wished we should principally observe, not that he was in the beginning God,but in the beginning with God; that he might show him to be God only by proximity and love, not in essence." (p. 110) This

interpretation seems to be quite satisfactory, if we can agree with Milton's assumption that the latter clause depends upon the former; but for this he gives no adequate reason, no does there appear to be any in the text itself.

"Another passage," writes Milton, "is the speech of Thomas, John 20:28, 'my Lord and my God.' He must have an immoderate share of credulity who attempts to elicit a new confession of faith unknown to the rest of the disciples, from this abrupt exclamation of the apostle, who invokes in his surprise, not only Christ his own Lord, but the God of his ancestors, namely, God the Father; -- as if he had said, 'Lord! what do I see -- what do I hear -- what do I handle with my hands?'" This seems somehow unconvincing, and one flaw, at least, in the argument is that Milton here assumes as true that which he is attempting to prove, namely, -- that this is a "new confession of faith, unknown to the rest of the disciples." The continuation of his argument, however, has more weight; he points out that Christ has said, only a few verses before, v. 17 "I ascend unto my God and your God", and declares that Christ has thus made clear the distinction between himself and God, and that God cannot be

essentially one with him whose God he is. Should we ground our faith, he asks, on the surprised ejaculation of a new disciple, or on the words of Christ himself? Heb. 1:8, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne O God is for ever and ever." This passage presents relatively little difficulty to Milton, since he has previously pointed out scores of verses in which the name of God is applied to beings, angels and even men, whom the writer could never have intended us to understand as the one God. And as Milton says, the very verse after this one, makes the distinction between God and Christ: "therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." These words, "Thy throne O God," he continues, were originally applied by the bridal virgins in Ps. 45 to Solomon, "to whom as appropriately as to Christ, the title of God might have been given on account of his kingly power, conformably to the language of scripture," (p. 111, C.D. v.1)

I Tim 3:19, "God was manifest in the flesh." This is simply explained: God is manifest "in the Son, his own image; in any other way he is invisible." (p. 115, C.D. v.1) In the same way he explains Phi. 2:6, "who being in the form of God" -- For to be in the

form of God, may well be taken as synonymous with being in the image of God, and it is often said of Christ that he was made in God's image. (p. 118)

And finally, Jude 4, "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," "Who will not agree that this is too verbose a mode of description, if all these words are intended to apply to the one person? or who would not rather conclude, on a comparison of many other passages which tend to confirm the same opinion, that they were spoken of two persons, namely, the Father the only Lord and our Lord Jesus Christ." (p.119) and indeed there appears to be no reason why we should refuse to accept these names as applying to two separate personalities; for, looking at the passage from Milton's point of view one almost feels that there is a distinction intended: "the only Lord God," who is above all, and "our Lord Jesus Christ" whom we have known on earth.

The most opposing passages of scripture re-interpreted to his own satisfaction, Milton is now free to define the position of the Holy Ghost and its relations to the Father and Son. "With regard to the nature of the Spirit, in what manner it exists, or when it arose, Scripture is silent: which is a caution

to us not to be too hasty in our conclusions on the subject. . . .Since therefore the Spirit is neither said to be generated nor created, nor is any other mode of existance specifically attributed to it in Scripture, we must be content to leave undetermined a point on which the sacred writers have preserved so uniform a silence." (p. 151) In both Old and New Testaments he argues, the word Spirit has so many and such various meanings that if we try to define the Holy Spirit too exactly we shall be running near the danger expressed in Christ's objection, "ye worship ye know not what." (John 4:22) His own conclusions he gives in these words: "although the Holy Spirit be nowhere said to have taken upon himself any mediatorial funcions, as is said of Christ, nor to be engaged by the obligation of a filial relation to pay obedience to the Father, yet he must evidently be considered as inferior to Father and Son, inasmuch as he is represented and declared to be subservient and obedient in all things; to have been promised and sent and given; to speak nothing of himself; and even to have been given as an earnest." (p. 155)

The Bible, however, would not have us be ignorant of who or what the Holy Spirit is, and although it

nowhere teaches us in definite terms, scattered passages make it possible for us to understand that the "Holy Spirit, inasmuch as he is a minister of God, and therefore a creature, was created or produced of the substance of God, . . .probably before the foundations of the world were laid, but later to the Son.. far inferior to him. . . .There is. . . .sufficient reason for placing the name as well as the nature of the Son above that of the Holy Spirit in the discussion of topics relative to the Deity; inasmuch as the brightness of the glory of God, and the express image of his person, are said to have been impressed on the one, and not on the other." (p. 169) There are, as usual, opposing passages to be put out of the way, and here Milton deals with them in few words and quite convincingly: Acts 5:3,4, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . .thou hast not lied unto men but unto God." ". . .Since the Spirit is expressly said to be sent by the Father, and in the name of the Son, he who lies to the Spirit must lie to God, in the same sense as he who receives an apostle, receives God who sent him." (p. 170)

Again the human body is sometimes called the temple of God, as in I Cor. 3:1 , II Cor. 6:16, but

in I Cor. 6:19 it is called the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the supporters of Trinity argue that this means that the Holy Spirit is God. But from Milton's point of view it does little to break down his theory, because we can consider the Holy Spirit and God as making their abode with us, not as one, but as separate identies. To support his argument, he remarks that St. Paul has added after speaking of the Holy Ghost, in I Cor. 6:19, "which ye have of God." "How then," writes Milton, "can it be deduced from this passage that he whom we have of God, is God himself?" (p. 161) Milton's final position then, inclines toward the position of the Socinians with the one God, a Unity, Absolute; the Son a separate identity, inferior, and with his attributes derived from the Father; and the Spirit also a separate identity and distinctly inferior to both. This final question we must remember although suggested at first by the dictates of reason, was not arrived at by reason alone, but by serious intense study of the scriptures and the conviction that the interpretation most in harmony with reason was the interpretation which God would wish us to have. And he appears to be able to place his last position on as satisfactory a basis in scripture as that of his

first. The Son he classes as not co-essential with the Father, and the Bible itself teaches that the Son was visible while the Father was not, that the will and understanding of the Father and the Son were not identical, and the Father was greater than the Son. All this seems to argue, as he would have it do, that the Father and the Son were not co-essential. Neither, he argues, are they co-eternal, and on this again Milton can find support in the Bible, for the Son was begotten of the Father, who is reported more than once as saying: "This day I have begotten thee" (Acts 13:37; Heb. 5:5; 1:5.) The Son he considered as inferior to God and all his excellencies and powers, his right to honour and worship, as derived from the Father by virtue of God's free gift; and this is supported by the Bible also, for Jesus himself says: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18) and, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." (Matt. 11:27) "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand " (John 3:35) etc. Again; the Holy Spirit is considered as inferior to both; and in the Bible we find the Holy Spirit treated as sent by the Father or the Son, and obedient to them. John 7:39, "for the Holy Ghost was

not yet given." Matt. 3:11, "he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Luke 11:13, "how much more shall you heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," John 14:16, 17, "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter. . . .even the Spirit of truth." 15:26; "the Comforter, whom I will send unto you from the Father, . . .which proceedeth from the Father." All this is enough to make it easily concluded, that although Milton first came to his position by the influence of reason, nevertheless he would not have remained with the theory of three separate identies if he had not been able to satisfy himself that in doing so he was following scripture.

His position, however, in the Christian Doctrine, although very much inclining towards Socinianism is not to be taken as identical. As Dr. Sumner, the translator of The Christian Doctrine, has remarked in his Preliminary Observations, there are two respects in which he is decidedly at variance with the Socinians. First the Holy Ghost, in Milton's position is an actual personality and only inferior to God himself and his Son, while the Socinians conceived of the Holy Ghost only as a virtue or energy flowing

from God to men" (Rac. Cat. Sect. 5, Chap.) Again, the Socicinians denied the eternal divinity and pre-existence of Christ; and Milton makes it very clear that he does not agree with them on either point: he speaks slightingly of commentators who interpret the "Holy Spirit as nothing more than the virtue and power of the Father," (p. 167) and regarding the nature of Christ he shows even more definitely his disagreement with the Socinians. His explanation of the origination of the Son as begotten by a decree of God, within the limits of time, but before all other creatures shows plainly that he believed in the pre-existence of Christ, but as if to make his position still more clear and to show that on this point he is not to be identified with the Socinians, he returns to the question in the chapter on Man's Restoration: "...ith regard to Christ's divine nature, the reader is referred to what was proved in a former chapter concerning the Son of God: from hence it follows, that he by whom all things were made both in heaven and earth . . . .must necessarily have existed previous to his incarnation, whatever subtleties may have been invented to evade this conclusion by those who contend for the merely human nature of Christ. ✝ (p. 5)

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✝ See Rac. Cat. Sect. 4, Chap. .

generally accepting, this distinction in the personalities of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and their relative positions are preserved in Milton's later work. In Paradise Lost God the Father is the SupremeAbsolute Being,the Son is a separate identity and inferior to the Father,while the Holy Ghost is barely mentioned throughout the poem.

In the Christian Doctrine,Milton has expressed the opinion that divine honours should be given the Son as well as the Father,but that all such power and glory were His by virtue only of the Father's free gift. This belief he holds consistently in Paradise Lost,and repeats it in various ways;the angels are represented as adoring the Son with the Father:

> .....Lowly reverent
> Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground
> With solemn adoration down they cast
> Their crowns. . . . . .
> Bk. 3, 349 --

But the Son's power and glory is clearly due him by virtue of the Father's command, as we hear in the words of God himself:

> . . . . . all power
> I give thee, reign for ever, and assume
> Thy merits, under thee, as Head Supreme.
> Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, and Dominions
> I reduce.
> Bk. 3, 317 --

And later, in the speach that caused the rebel-

lion of the angels:

> . . . . . .Your head I him appoint
> And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
> All knees in Heaven. . . . . .
> (Bk. 5, 605, --)

Even the war in Heaven was allowed to proceed as it did, so that the Father might "honour his anointed Son and declare all power on him transferred." (Bk. 5, 670, --) And in Book 10 God tells the Son that he has transferred to him all judgment "whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell." (l. 56) Quite plainly then, here as in the Christian Doctrine, all the power of the Son is derived, -- transferred by free gift from the Father to the Son.

His theory of the Christian Doctrine that the Son is the visible image of the invisible God, Milton retains consistently and repeats more than once in Paradise Lost:

> . . . . . .on his right
> The radiant image of his glory sat
> His only Son. . . . . .
> (Bk. 3, 62, --)

> . . . . . .in him all his Father shon
> Substantially expressed. . . . . .
> (Bk. 3, 139, --)

> Thee next they sang, of all creation first,
> Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
> In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud
> Made visible, the Almighty Father shines
> Whom else no creature can behold. . . . .
> (Bk. 3, 383, --)

Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, ...
(Bk. 5, 719, --)

. . . . . He full
Resplendent all his Father manifest
Expressed. . . . . .
(Bk. 10, 65, --)

There are, however, several points of difference which are rather hard to account for in view of Milton's exact and emphatic statements in the Christian Doctrine. For instance, after having insisted there that the Son is not equal to God, but decidedly inferior, he now has God speak of the Son as,

. . . . . throned in highest bliss
Equal to God, and equally enjoying
God-like fruition. . . . . .
(Bk. 3, 305, --)

But this need not be taken as a serious inconsistency, when we remember the predominance of passages which show plainly the distinction of positions, and the inferiority of the Son's, such as,

Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
Second to thee, offered himself to die
For Man's offence. . . . . .
(Bk. 3, 407, --)

And, the words of the Son, in Book 3,

Then shall thy Saints. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Unfeigned hallelujahs to thee sing
. . . . . and I among them chief
(Bk. 3, 742, --)

A greater difficulty is found in the question regarding the time of the Son's origin, or creation. In the Christian Doctrine, Milton declares that the Son, though begotten within the limits of time, was the first of all creatures, and in Paradise Lost he speaks more than once of the Son as the first-born, "Heaven's first-born," "of all creation first". And yet the story itself in Book 5 seems to require the belief that the Angels, Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers were made first. For in Book 5 we read of them all being assembled to behold the Son: "This day I begot whom I declare my only Son." Apparently the other inhabitants of Heaven were created first, or they would not have been gathered together before the Son and told of his creation, nor would they have rebelled against his power over them as against "New laws. . . .imposed:" for their subordination to the Son, if he had been already in existence when they were created, would have seemed to them the natural thing. Also the narrative following, and the later conversation of the angels, suggest that they had been established for some time in heaven.

> That day, as other solemn days, they spent
> In song and dance. . . . . .
> (Bk. 5, 618, --)

And Satan, later, rousing his comrades to rebellion, speaks as if he and the other angels remembered earlier days in heaven,

> Thou to me thy thoughts
> Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart
> Both waking we were one. . . . . .
> (Bk. 5, 676, --)

and,

> Natives and Sons of Heaven possessed before
> By none. . . . . .
> (Bk. 5, 790, --)

The most probable explanation is that Milton noticed himself never the significance of the words "This day I have begot", in this connection. For this is the only place in the poem where it is suggested that the Son was not the first of all creatures, and although it is an important episode in the poem, since the whole rebellion of the wicked angels depends upon it, nevertheless it is probably a case of Biblical words slipping in without Milton's being fully aware of their significance.

In addition to this deviation from his position in The Christian Doctrine, there are two passages in which he appears to confuse the identities of the Father and Son in such a way as to be satisfactory to the most firm Trinitarian. The first is in Book 7

in the account of the creation: God sends the Son forth "to bid the Deep within the appointed bounds be heaven and earth"(166-7); and the Son appears on his "great expedition". (196); and yet when the creation actually takes place, it seems to be done by God himself, "Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth," (232) "'Let there be Light!' said God," (243) and "God saw, surveying his great work, that it was good." (352-3)

This should not be taken as indicative of a change in his position however, or as a serious inconsistency. The explanation, it seems to me, is that Milton had determined to keep to the New Testament picture of Christ as the agent of creation, by whom God made the worlds (Heb. 1:2), and by whom all things were created (Col. 1:16) etc; he takes the words literally and wants to give a concrete picture, and so sends the Son forth, but an account of the creation would seem incomplete without the phrases from Genesis, such as, "And God said, Let there be Light," "And God called the light Day," "and God saw that it was good." Such phrases seem almost inseparably connected with the creation, and slipping into Milton's account naturally cause apparent confusion between the two personalities.

The other passage is in the tenth book of Paradise Lost, when God decides that the Son shall be sent to judge Adam and Eve: "But whom send I to judge them? Whom but thee, Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferred all judgment"; however, when the Divine judge arrived in Eden, it was "the voice of God they heard".

> And from his presence hid themselves among
> The thickest trees, both man and wife, till God
> Approaching thus to Adam called aloud: -- (l. 100)
> Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
> To judgment he proceeded. . . . . (l. 160)

This apparent confusion of identities may be explained in a way similar to the preceding one; the explanation being probably that in the first place Milton wishes to send the Son as judge in anticipation of His position at the last day, for the picture of the Son as judge and mediator always appealed to Milton, appealed to him far more than the picture of Christ as Redeemer paying for our sin with his life. Also, to send the Son helped Milton in his justification of the ways of God to man: for it meant sending "Mercy colleague with justice." Then when he comes to describe the actual judgment in Eden, the Biblical phraseology slips in unawares: Gen. 3:8, 9, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God. . .And the Lord God

called unto Adam." and again we have an apparent confusion of identities.

When we come to Paradise Regained, however, we find two passages that are quite Socinian in tone, both of them connected with the eternal divinity of Christ. The first of these is from the lips of God himself, and is hard to understand, since Milton has been at such pains in the Christian Doctrine to make clear his distinction from the Socinians on this point.

> That all the Angels and Aethereal Powers --
> They now, and Men hereafter -- may discern
> From what consummate virtue I have chose
> This perfect man, by merit called my Son.

It seems very possible that Milton here in his rebellion against a king's claim to heredity power, a rebellion which remained with him all his life, sought to make the distinction between position by merit and position by virtue of lineage. His ideal, of course, was position by merit and this he would attribute to the Son as part of his continued attempt to justify the ways of God to man, by showing that it is merit rather than position that influences God in his choice of men. The full significance of the words and their possible interpretation Milton probably never realized.

The other passage is put in the mouth of Satan, in Book 4,

> Then hear, O Son of David, virgin born!
> For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.
> (Bk. 4, 500, --)

Satan then proceeds to speak of how he had observed Christ from childhood on,

> . . . . . .that I might learn
> In what degree of meaning thou art called
> The Son of God, which bears no single sense.
> The Son of God I also am, or was;
> And, if I was, I am; relation stands:
> All men are Sons of God. . . . . .
> (Bk. 4, 515, --)

This passage may well be introduced here to give Milton an opportunity of showing the Socinian belief on this point, of defeating it, and making his separation from them clearly known. For the next lines show Christ proving, by his merit, that he is the true Son of God; and show also Satan, who had suggested the doubt, "smitten with amazement," falling, who "durst so proudly tempt the Son of God."

IX

PREDESTINATION; FREE-WILL; FORE-KNOWLEDGE.

It is hard to take the Bible literally and believe in complete free will, and yet it is hard, very hard, for the human mind to giveup the belief in this freedom. This conflict between the letter of the Bible and the hope of the human heart has given rise to much controversy on the subject. Not long after the time of Christ the controversy began to take very definite terms and, as early as the fourth century Augustine was insisting that the sin of Adam brought upon his descendants a bondage of the will, and an inherited dominion of sin in the soul; conversion he ascribed wholly to divine grace, which is irresistible and bestowed only on God's elect. This theory reached through intense study and logical acceptance of the darker side of Scripture seems to ordinary human nature, rather a heart-breaking, hope-removing doctrine. If we are one of the elect, we will be saved, will it or no, in fact we have no will, for the willing of grace will not bring it to us and repelling it will not drive it away; it is given to the elect only, it is irresistible. This doctrine, hard as it may seem, has a sound scriptural foundation in such passages as these: Rom. 9:11. "For the children

being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works but of him that calleth;" 9:16. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Acts 13:48. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad. . . . .and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Eph. 1:4. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Eph. 3:11. "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." 2Thess. 2:13. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." The theory also provides for a great deal that is essential to Christian religion, the omnipotence of God, man's inherent sin and consequent need of help, and lastly for God's grace.

This aspect of the omnipotence of God, however, gives man a very small part in the picture; everything is settled from without, and before his existence and his is merely the passive role of being acted upon by a Supreme Arbitrary power. This subordination of the position of man in the scheme of things, could not hope long for whole-hearted acceptance from many: the utter hopelessness of life, the futility of all human endeavor under such a belief took all the life

and breath out of Christianity and it was not long before Augustine's doctrine had an ardent and extreme opponent. Pelaguis, early in the fifth century vindicated the free will of man. This was his argument: God is just, therefore everything which he created was good; and Man's chief glory is his reason and his free will. Adam sinned through his own will, and so do all his ancestors. The mind of man is not depraved at the outset, but man may be born sinless and remain without sin. There is no such thing as origional sin, for sin is a product of the will, not of nature. Adam's descendants when they sin do it not by necessity, any more than did Adam. Their only misfortune, in that regard, lies in the fact that they are in the environment of sin, while Adam was in the world in its first good and pure state as God made it. This doctrine, restoring to man his freedom, with the incentive to an individual struggle for a virtuous life, though it had to contend against very strong scriptural support on the side of the Augustines, was more in keeping with the whole spirit of Christianity; the message which Christ brought into the world was one of love, hope, freedom, and a plea to each individual to make himself more worthy of the kingdom of God. Now a system based on the doctrine of predestination does

not spread love, hope or freedom, for either one is of the elect or one is not; and for those who feel that they are not of the elect there can be no joy or hope whatever; neither is there any room for human endeavour. — for individual responsibility, one's fate is settled beforehand; why should humanity struggle blindly against the dictates of predestination?

But the Pelagians were inclined to carry the argument too far in the opposite direction, and give man so prominent a part in the picture that God's position tended to be reduced to that of a judge who gave out final reward or punishment according to the deeds of man who was moved by his free will only. Their position necessarily took away from the importance of God's omnipotence; it had to deny origional sin, and to discount largely the importance of God's grace, and Augustine had little difficulty in showing that much of the Pelagian system was anti-scriptural.

And, so, very early in the history of Christianity we have the two sides clearly defined in a controversy which, indeed, still goes on in modern times. The battle was being waged in the fourth century, in the eighth it was not settled; it was being waged at the time of the Reformation; in Milton's day it was not settled; it is being waged now, and will probably

never be settled.

Coming to the sixteenth century,-Luther and Calvin both accepted the rigid doctrine of predestination. The "Institutes" of Calvin set forth the theory of predestinationto life or to death by an independent and immutable decree of God. And Luther's position was stated in these words: "the will of man may be called a free will, not in relation to what is above it, that is, God, but is to be esteemed free in relation to what is beneath it; that is to say, with my goods, fields, house and farm, I can act, manage and deal freely, as I will. . . . .but in relation to God, and in matters which concern his salvation, man has no free will, but is captive and subject to the will of God and of Satan." (Luther's Werke.)

In Milton's own day the Arminians in particular were struggling to uproot the orthodox opinion on this much vexed question. The Arminians insisted upon conditional election, universal atonement, intended for all but not actually efficient for everyone,-thus bringing the importance of human endeavour and personal responsibility more to the fore. The chief exponent of this doctrine, Arminuis, was a well-educated popular preacher at Amsterdam, who, until 1589, had been a firm believer in Calvain's doctrines. In this year,

however, he was requested to give an answer to Theodore Koornhert, of Amsterdam, who attacked the Calvinistic position. While preparing his answer Arminius became more and more doubtful of the doctrines which it was his task to uphold; and the final result was that he accepted the theories which he had intended to refute. The controversy that followed led to a constructive exposition of the theological position antagonistic to Calvinism. In 1610, the stand of the Arminians was clearly defined in the Five Articles of the Remonstrance Addressed to the State-General of Holland and West Friesland. The material of three of these Articles is worth setting down in full, so nearly does it concern our subject:

1. The first article affirms that election is conditional upon, and inseparable from, Divine foreknowledge of faith and perseverance, and reprobation upon foreknowledge of unbelief and sin persisted in.

2. The second affirms that the atonement through Christ's death is universal and efficient for all though not necessarily accepted and effective in every case, denying any a priori limitation of to elect persons.

3. The third affirms that fallen man cannot accomplish good or attain to saving faith unless regenerated through the Holy Spirit.

The Socinians also had very definite opinions on this question, although their stand was so far removed from Calvinism that it could not be called, as the Arminian position was, a conscious campaign against the Calvinistic doctrine, predestination. The Socinians insisted upon free will: "it is certain that the first man was so created by God as to be endowed with free will; and there was no reason why God should deprive him of it after his fall. . . . .Nor is there any mention of a punishment of this kind among the penalties with which God punished the sin of Adam," they were even opposed to the generally accepted belief in original sin "the fall of Adam, as it was but one act, could not have power to deprave his own nature, much less that of his posterity" although "by the habit of sinning the nature of man is infected with . . . . a very strong disposition to wickedness. (Rac. Cat.)

The Articles of the Church of England insist upon origional or birth-sin "engendered in the off-spring of Adam;" and in regard to free will the tenth article states that "we have no power to do good works pleasant or acceptable to God, without the grace of God preventing us, that we may have a good will." And predestination is restricted to Predestination to Life: "the everlasting purpose of God. . . .to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath

chosen in Christ out of mankind." The stand of the Presbyterians is set forth as follows, from the chapter in The Westminster Confessions: Of God's Eternal Decree,

1. God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as neither is God thereby the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet he hath not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

4. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it can neither be increased or diminished.

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and

the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ into everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto. . . . .

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. . . . . Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

7. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. . . . " Westminster Confession, Chap. 3.

A philosophy of this sort, carrying with it such complete subordination of the human will, could not long be expected to satisfy Milton. It is true that in his earlier works we see him apparently accepting the Presbyterian position, as in the following quotation from the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, written in 1643: "The Jesuits . . . . charge us of making God the author of sin . . .. Because we hold that he hath decreed some to damnation and consequently to sin, say they; next, Because those means, which are of saving knowledge to others, he makes to them an occasion of greater sin." (C.D. p. 223) And in 1651 in his Defence of the People of England , in reply to Salmasuis criticism that England would not let her king rule by God but by the people, Milton answered: "As if God did not so overrule the people, that they set up such kings as it pleases God." (C.D. p.142)

These two passages certainly suggest a belief in the impotence of the human will, even in the practical affairs of life, as well as in the matter of ultimate salvation. But they are most decidedly un-Miltonic, for the general tone of his writings from the Horton poems to his very last publication in 1673, emphasizes the need for personal liberty and the value of individual judgment and free choice. Even as early as the Areo-

pagitica he insists upon Adam's freedom to choose in the matters of right and wrong, but it is not until the composition of the Christian Doctrine that we find him actually facing the problem of predestination and free will from the Biblical standpoint, and seeking a solution to the question that this doctrine brings. His solution as far as it may be called one, is characteristic of the man who had written with such vehemence in the problems of religious, domestic, and finally, civil liberty.

First, then, he does not believe in unconditioned election. Election is conditional upon God's foreknowledge of man's faith and perseverance in righteousness. He defines Predestination as "Special Decree. . . whereby God in pity to mankind, though foreseeing that they would fall of their own accord, predestinated to eternal salvation before the foundation of the world those who should believe and continue in the faith." (C.D. p.43)

"It seems, then, that there is no particular predestination or election, but only general,. . .or in other words, that the privilege belongs to all who heartily believe and continue in their belief, . . . that none are predestinated or elected irrespectively, e.g. that Peter is not elected as Peter, or John as

John, but inasmuch as they are believers and continue in their belief . . . and that thus the general decree of election becomes personally applicable to each particular believer, and is ratified to all who remain steadfast in the faith. (C.D. p. 49) Predestination of this sort, of course, loses all its sting; if we believe at all in everlasting reward or punishment for our deeds on earth, it is no further trial to believe that God predestinated us to our future lots, according to the issue of our lives. But this seems nevertheless a very painless interpretation of such passages as; Rom. 9:11. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." or,9:18. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth." But Milton's interpretation is just what we should expect; for tyranny of every sort he opposed; and in this case, in particular, where it affected every man's whole life, he felt it necessary to draw man away from the tyranny of an eternal decree.

The advocates of unconditional election have, however, rather too firm a ground in Scripture to be easily overcome; and when Milton undertakes to break

down their supports, he is setting himself a difficult task. Since all of his arguments on this question are very similar, it will be sufficient to consider only the most important ones.

Acts, 13:48, "When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." "The difficulty," argues Milton, "is caused by the abrupt manner in which the sacred historian introduces an assertion, which appears at first sight to contradict himself as well as the rest of Scripture, for he had before attributed to Peter this saying, Chap. X, 34, 35, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respector of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him". . . . . Now those who hold the doctrine that a man believes because he is ordained to eternal life, not that he is ordained to eternal life because he will believe, cannnt avoid attributing to God the character of a respector of persons, which he so constantly disclaims. Nor would such a dispensation be calculated to encourage the other nations, who would immediately conclude from it that there was no occasion for any will or works of their own in order to obtain eternal life,

but that the whole depended on some eternal decree, whereas on the contrary, Scripture uniformly shows in the clearest manner that as many as have been ordained to eternal life believe. . . .because they have been ordained on the condition of believing." (p. 57) There are several comments to make on Milton's interpretation here: first his statement, that this verse appears to contradict the rest of scripture, shows him again assuming the truth of what he sets out to prove, and using it as an argument; and it may be argued that his statement is, strictly speaking, inaccurate for there are a number of other passages which are in harmony with this one, similar in meaning and in words (Rom. 8:30; Eph. 3:11; etc.). Also, it seems to me that he is making the words "respector of person" take on a meaning which was not originally intended: for the natural interpretation of Peter's words "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respector of persons," would be that God had removed the distinction of clean and unclean that hitherto had separated Jew and infidel, and had left the way open for followers in all nationalities; but Milton would take Peter's words to mean that God was no respector of persons in the way of showing favor to a certain few

irrespective of merit. The rest of his argument on this passage, that a many may have been ordained to eternal life believe, because they have been ordained on that condition, has firm support in the Bible, as we shall see later.

Another difficult passage is: Rom. 8:28-30, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose: for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son . . . .moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called , them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

"In the first place it must be remarked, that it appears from ver. 28, that those 'who love God' are the same as those 'who are the called according to his purpose' and consequently as those 'whom he did foreknow', and 'whom he did predestinate', for 'them he also called' as is said in ver. 30. Hence, it is apparent that the apostle is here pronounding the scheme and order of predestination in general, but of the predestination of certain individuals in preference to others. For if he had said 'we know that all things work together for good to those who

love God, that is, [illegible] believe, for those who love God believe in Him. Further, in the order, God first knew, foreseen those who should believe, that is, he decreed or announced it as his ple sure that it should be those alone who should find grace in his sight through Christ, that is, all men, if they would believe. These he predestinated to salvation, and to this end he in various ways called all mankind to believe, or in other words, to acknowledge God in Truth; Those who actually thus believed he justified; and those who continued in the faith unto the end he finally glorified. . . . In the passage under discussion it is evident that the approving knowledge of God can be alone intended; but he foreknew or approved no one except in Christ, and no one in Christ except a believer. Those therefore who were about to love, that is, to believe in God, God foreknew or approved; -- or in general all men, if they should believe; those whom he thus foreknew, he predestinated, and called them that they might believe; those who believed he justified. . ." (p. 55 - 6) This seems a very understandable and sane explanation of a difficult passage; and his inter retation here is not at all hard to accept, for even the order of the words

in the Bible in Milton's order, in his argument that foreknowledge precedes and makes possible predestination.

Under this interpretation he groups Rom. 11:2, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." II Tim. 2:19, "The Lord knoweth them that are his" I Pet. 1:2, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit." (p. 54)

And lastly Rom. 9:16,"it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" When God determined to restore mankind, Milton argues, he gave them again not the complete liberty of will which they had enjoyed before the fall, but a limited freedom of will. And he writes: "Whomsoever therefore in the exercise of that degree of freedom which their will had acquired either previously to their call, or by reason of the call itself, God had seen in any respect willing or running. . . . . to them he gave a greater power of willing and running, that is, of believing." This interpretation seems to take one a long way from the original text of the Bible, for the words there, do not speak of God giving help of belief in proportion as the believer is al-

ready inclined to believing, but the words say absolutely that it lies with God alone and not with the believer, it is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth but of God which showeth mercy."

The foreknowledge of God Milton did not dispute for a moment: "So extensive is the prescience of God, that he knows beforehand the thoughts and actions of free agents as yet unborn, and many ages before those or actions have their origin." (p. 27), but he did insist that it was not to be confused with an eternal decree. The fact of foreknowledge alone, he maintains, has no influence whatever on the event itself, which would have been realized in the same way if it had not been foreknown. God was not able to foresee because he had already decreed, but he was able to decree because he had foreseen. In other words, he did not foreknow that a certain man would be among the elect because he had already chosen this man by an eternal decree; but he saw by his foreknowledge that the man would believe, and that therefore he would be among the elect, because of the general decree that all who believed should be saved.

"To comprehend the whole matter in a few words, the sum of the argument may be thus stated in strict

conformity with reason, God of his wisdom determined to create men and angels reasonable beings, and therefree agents; foreseeing at the same time which way the bias of their will would incline, in the exercise of their own uncontrolled liberty. What then? Shall we say that this foresight or foreknowledge on the part of God imposed on them the necessity of acting in any definite way? No more than if the future event had been foreseen by any human being. . . .The issue does not depend on God who foresees it, but on him alone who is the object of his foresight." (p. 39)

"I allow that future events, which God has foreseen, will happen certainly, but not of necessity. They will happen certainly, because the divine foreknowledge cannot be deceived, but they will not happen necessarily, because prescience can have no influence on the object foreknown, inasmuch as it is only an intransitive action. What therefore is to happen according to contingency and the free will of man, is not the effect of God's prescience, but is produced by the free agency of its own natural causes, the future spontaneous inclination of which is perfectly known to God. Thus God foreknew that Adam would fall of his own free will; his fall was therefore certain,

but not necessary, since it proceeded from his own free will, which is incompatible with necessity." (p. 41) Or, as he condenses this theory later in Paradise Lost:

> . . . . . .If I foreknew,
> Foreknowledge had no influence of their fault,
> Whcih had no less proved certain unforeknown.
> (Bk. 3, 117, --)

So much of Milton's argument rests upon his theory of conditional election that it is worth while to pause here and see what foundation this theory has in scripture. He brings, in support, an array of scriptural passages to prove that the decree was conditional both before the fall and after. Gen. 2:17, "thou shalt eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Which he interprets, and with reason, to mean "if thou eatest thou shalt die; if thou eatest not, thou shalt live." And after the fall: I Chron. 28:6, 7, 9, "I have chosen him to be my son and I will be his father. . . .if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day . . . .if thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou foresake him he will cast thee off for ever." 2 Chron. 6:16, "There shall not fail thee a man. . . .to sit upon the throne of Israel, yet so

that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me." etc. These passages, we see, cannot be taken as examples of eternal decrees, because in both cases taken, the decree is set forth at a particular time, and is not a decree to salvation, but only to some worldly end. Milton admits this, however, and points out that there can be discovered in the Old Testament scarcely a single expression referring to election to eternal life. However he argues that the principle of the divine decree is in all cases the same.

His theory finds plainer support in the New Testament, however, in such passages as the following: Mark 16:6, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." John 3:16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 15:6, "if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch." 15:10, "if ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandment." 17:20, "neither pray for these alone, but for them which shall believe on me through their word." and many others similar to these. The collection

of such passages certainly gives a sufficient support to his doctrine of conditional election, and at the same time supports his interpretation of the passages used by the advocates of rigid predestination.

His theory of conditional election, of course, leaves the human will free, and restores man's salvation to his own hands, giving a very reasonable basis for the needfor right actions. We have noticed before Milton's strong sense of reason, and we see why he chose this theory, so much more reasonable from the point of view of man and of God. It would be most unreasonable, on the one hand, for man to struggle by faith and a righteuos life for salvation against the eternal decree of a blind election. On the other hand, God would not be showing the use of much reason to elect a certain number for eternal reward and leave the remainder to eternal perdition quite regardless of their faith or righteousness shown in their lives. This freedom of the human will, and man's entire responsibility for his actions is insisted upon throughout Paradise Lost:

> Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
> Thou hadst. Whom hadst thou then, or what, to accuse,
> But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
> Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate,

To me alike it deals eternal woe.
Nay cursed be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rules.
(Bk. 4, 66, --)

. . . . . .and such discourse bring on
As may advise him of his happy state --
Happiness in his power left free to will,
Left to his own free will, his will though free
Yet mutable. . . . . .
(Bk. 5, 333, --)

again,

. . . . . freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall.
(Bk. 5, 533, --)

Therefore, when a man sins the fault is his alone and not God's.

. . . . . .Whose fault?
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
All he could have; I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all the Ethereal Powers
And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
(Bk. 3, 96)

The reasonableness of this theory is also brought forth: under eternal election man would have had no way of showing his own good will or want of it, and God would have had no means of judging their stability:

Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
Where only what they needs must do appeared,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive,
What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,
When Will and Reason (reason also is choice),
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled
Made passive both, had served Necessity,
Not me? . . . . . .
(Bk. 3, 103, --)

and,

> . . . . . no decree of mine,
> Concurring to necessitate his fall,
> Or touch with lightest moment of impulse
> His free will, to her own inclining lift
> In even scale. . . . . .
> (Lk. 10, 43, --)

This leaves us with a very rea onable conception of predestination, free-will and foreknowledge. It is reasonable from the point of view of man and of God; giving man an opportunity, under free will, to prove his worth, and giving God a means of testing obedience and faith. It also restores to prominence the foreknowledge of God, emphasized so much throughout the Bible; for it seems to me to assume a much higher quality of foreknowledge to consider God as foreseeing what would happen under free will and from natural causes, than to foresee what would happen as the result of his own decree. It also gives the more reasonable place to God's justice, allowing a justice really worthy the name. But, at this point, we have only part of the picture: the conception of man as a free agent, and of God dealing with him according to his faith and righteousness, leaves out a very important element of Christianity, perhaps the most important of the New Testament. That is, God's mercy and grace. It is this element in religion

that gives the personal relation between the Father and man; it is this that keeps God from being considered merely as a supreme judge of the actions of a free agent; and it is this that accounts for the "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15:10)

Milton, having settled the question of foreknowledge and predestination, turns to grace and postulates that it is just as necessary to man as a free agent as to man as a predestinated being:

"But an objection of another kind may perhaps be made. If God be said to have predestinated men only on condition that they believe and continue in the faith, predestination will not be altogether of grace, but must depend on the will and belief of mankind, which is derogatory to the exclusive efficacy of divine grace: I maintain on the contrary that so far from the doctrine of grace being called into question it is thus placed in a much clearer light then by the theory of those who make the objection. For the grace of God is seen to be infinite, in the first place, by his showing any pity at all for man whose fall was to happen through his own fault. Secondly, by his 'so loving the world, that he gave

his only begotten Son' for the salvation. Thirdly, by his granting us again the power of volition, that is, of acting freely, in consequence of recovering the liberty of the will by the renewing of the Spirit." (p. 62)

However, Milton seems almost unable to deal with the question of grace without subordinating the position of man, at times almost to the extent of taking away his will in matters of right and wrong: "the power of willing and believing is either the gift of God, or, so far as it is inherent in man, partakes not of the nature of merit or of good works, but only of a natural faculty." (p. 63) again: "if we do right, of if God assign any recompense to our right actions, it is altogether owing to his grace."

He has always favoured the idea, repeated throughout the Bible, that angels may guard men and keep them from temptation: this thought is given expression very early in his life, and appears again and again in Comus in such passages as this,

> Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
> Chances to pass through this adventrous glade
> . . . . . .
> I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy
> (C., 78)

The same thought is repeated in Paradise Lost; when first the bridge across Chaos is mentioned:

. . . . . a bridge of wondrous length,
. . . . . .
. . . . . by which the spirits perform
With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace.
(Bk. X, 1027, ----)

Now the thought behind this, -- call it mercy, or grace, or the guardianship of the righteous, takes away from us the character of a free agent, subjected to the influence of good and evil, armed with "strength entire and free will;" and is out of harmony with Eve's very reasonable question in Bk. 9.

And what is faith, love, virtue unassayed
Alone, without exterior help sustained?
(Bk. 9, 375)

By faith, he writes in the Christian Doctrine we are justified; and this faith is in the "first instance infused from above;" (p. 354) and so it is in Paradise Lost.

. . . . . (Grace) to all
Comes unprevented unimplored unsought.
(Bk. 3, 230)

Previent grace descending had removed
The story from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead. . . . .
(Bk. 11, 3)

But Milton insisted with the Arminians that grace was not irrisistible:

. . . . . what Hellish hate
So easily destroyed, and still destroys
In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
(Bk. 3, 200)

On this question of grace, his opinions in The Christian Doctrine and in Paradise Lost, seem particularly in harmony. He insists that if God be willing that no man should perish, as he often declares he is, then "he must also will that an adequate proportion of saving grace shall be withholden from no man." (p.68) But we are not to understand that he gives grace in equal measure to all: "That an equal portion of grace should not be extended to all, is attributable to the supreme will of God alone; that there are none to whom he does not vouchsafe grace sufficient for their salvation is attributable to his justice." (p. 67) This belief in universal, though not equal, grace, is shown in Paradise Lost:

> Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
> Elect above the rest; so is my will:
> The rest shall here me call, and oft be warned
> Their sinful state . . . . . .
> . . . . . .while offer'd grace
> Invites; . . . . . .
> (Bk. 3, 183)

In his effort to show that man owes his salvation to God , and God alone, Milton sometimes comes very near the pitfalls of unconditioned election:

> . . . . . .and me owe
> All his deliverance; and to none but me.
> (Bk. 3,181)

> Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will;
> Yet not of will in him but grace in me
> Freely voutsafed. . . . . .
> (Bk. 3, 173)

Now, if grace, which alone is sufficient for salvation, be given through God's will alone, and not through man's, one may ask Milton, what proof is man giving "sincere of true allegiance, constant faith or love?" But this question is hardly fair to him, because we are now speaking of conditions after the fall of man, and then it is only through God's grace and not through man's will that man is given an opportunity to redeem himself. To a certain extent, however, we may say that his treatment of grace, takes away from man his most treasured possession, in Milton's eyes, that is, entire free will; and it remains for us to consider what influenced Milton to use it as he did.

First the grace of God, as essential to man's salvation is taught throughout the Bible; the free grace and mercy of God is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, messages of the New Testament. Eph. 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Titus 3:7, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life. I Cor. 15:10,

"But by the grace of God, I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." It seems also to be bestowed upon man irrespective of merit, and before the world began: Eph. 2:4, 5, "But God, who is rich in mercy. . . .Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by Grace ye are saved); and hath raised us together. . ." 2 Tim. 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Such passages Milton took very literally and found a place for them in Paradise Lost as well as in the Christian Doctrine, with no attempt at reinterpretation or elaboration. The reason for this whole hearted acceptance of the doctrine of grace is, at least, twofold.

First, then, one important reason is that Milton believed in original sin; and this belief itself tends to take away from the freedom of the human spirit. Man begins his life with a bias towards evil, and needs the help or grace of God before he can be inclined again toward righteousness. Again it is al-

most impossible to believe in an omnipotent and personal God, and at the same time in the complete freedom of the human will. It leaves God too small a part in man's affairs to be consistent with his omnipotence; and also it leaves him too little concerned with man's salvation, to be consistent with his personal love for mankind and his infinite mercy. Milton appreciated too vividly God's omnipotence as taught throughout the Bible, and his infinite mercy and love which is the great message of the New Testament, to be happy in discarding in the matter of salvation, God's sole power, and the personal relation between man and his Maker. The personal relation is effected by the bestowal of God's grace on man, and the doctrine of grace Milton incorporated into his theology, even though it seems sometimes almost at the sacrifice of justice.

Before proceeding to the discussion of original sin in the next chapter, there is a little more to be said on the question of divine grace. Milton seems to have wondered in later years as to the logic of God's position. If he gave man grace that man might be saved because he loved him so, why did he make man originally so frail that he fell so easily? Or why

since he created all things, did he, loving man as he did, make a place of perpetual punishment for the wicked? The explanation that he sends grace to man out of his infinite mercy and love seems inconsistent with his having man so readily to be seduced in the first place, or with his having made a hell and appointed it as the final abode of the wicked. In Paradise Lost, Milton puts into the mouth of the Son himself a much more rational interpretation of God's grace:

The discussion opens in Book 3 where the question of grace is first dealt with; and he begins with the accepted explanation of grace as coming through God's mercy and justice:

> "O Father, gracious was that word which closed
> Thy sovran sentence, that man should find grace;
> . . . . . .
> For, should Man finally be lost -- should Man,
> Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
> Full circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
> With his own folly -- ! That be from thee far,
> That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
> Of all things made and judgest only right!"
> (Bk. 3, 144, --)

and then comes the real difficulty,

> "Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
> His end, and frustrate thine? Shall he fulfil
> His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught
> Or proud return, though to his Heavier doom
> Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell
> Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
> By him corrupted? Or wilt thou thyself
> Abolish thy creation, and unmake,

> For him, what for thy glory thou hast made? --
> So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
> Be questioned and blasphemed without defence."

The same logic seems to have come to Adam: if God made human beings as an object of love and to have them people heaven, he naturally had to take some measure to retain them in his own keeping, and prevent his adversary from seducing them all; as well as to keep the criticism of instability from being directed to himself.

> Nor can I think the God, Creator wise,
> Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
> Us his prime creatures. . . . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . . So God shall uncreate,
> Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose --
> Not well conceived of God; who though his power
> Creation could repeat, yet would be loth
> Us to abolish, lest the Adversary
> Triumph and say: "Fickle their state whom God
> Most favours; who can please him long? Me first
> He ruined, now Mankind; whom will be next? --
> Matter of scorn not to be given the foe."
> (Bk. 9, 938)

Even if this were accepted as Milton's considered and deliberate theory of the origination of grace, it would not necessarily mean that he was thinking anything at all derogatory to the dignity of God. For he had so well succeeded in making God in man's image that he considered that any action which would be judicious and wise on the part of man would be so on the part of God.

X

S I N

The acceptance of the belief in original sin must have been hard indeed for a man of Milton's character. He believed above all else in the need for human freedom and in the worth of the individual man; and yet he had to believe that every man was born with sin within his soul with his feet turned in the paths of unrighteousness. This belief is observable very early in his life: in 1629, when he wrote On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, we find this passage in the second stanza of the hymn,

> (Nature) woos the gentle air
> To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
> And on her naked shame
> Pollute with sinful blame
> The saintly veil of maiden white to throw.

And four years later the same thought is definitely expressed:

> That we on Earth, with undiscording voice,
> May rightly answer that melodious noise;
> As once we did, till disproportioned Sin
> Jarred against Nature's chime, and with harsh din
> Broke the fair music that all creatures made
> To their great Lord, ...
> . . . . . .while they stood
> In first obedience; and their state of good.
> (At a Solemn Music)

And later in the same year:

> For we, by rightful doom remediless,
> Were lost in death, till He, that dwelt above
> . . . . . .for frail dust
> Emptied his glory, ...
> (Upon The Circumcism)

This belief he holds throughout the years, and unlike many of his youthful theories, it finds its way unchanged into the Christian Doctrine: "The sin which is common to al men is that which our first parents and in them all their posterity committed, when casting off their first obedience to God, they tasted the fruit of the forbidden tree." (p. 253) Our share in that first transgression is transmitted to us, as descendants of Adam, "in the shape of an innate propensity to sin."

This same thought is expressed throughout Paradise Lost in various ways. In Book3, God forseeing how Adam would fall, declares that all his descendants will be involved in the sin.:

> "As in him perish all men, so in thee,
> As from a second root, shall be restored,
> As many as are restored. . . . . .
> His crime makes guilty all his sons; --"
> (Bk. 3, 287)

In book 9, when Adam yielded to the persuasion of Eve, Nature

> . . . . . ,some sad drops
> Wept at the completing of the mortal Sin
> Original. . . . . .
> (Bk. 9, 1002)

And Adam himself realized, almost immediately after the fall, the legacy of sin which he was to pass

on to his descendants,

". . . . . .in me all
Posterity stands cursed. Fair patrimony
That I must leave ye, sons! . . . . ."
(Bk. 10, 817)

Michael also gives expression to this belief:

"Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold
The effects which thy original crime hath wrought
In some to spring from thee, who never touched
The excepted Tree. . . . . .
Nor sinned thy sin, yet from that sin derive
Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds."
(Bk. 11, 423)

This belief in the original sin was of course the prevailing opinion of Milton's time. "Original sin. . . .is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam," (Article 9, of the Church of England Prayer Book) "They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation," (Chap.6, Westminster Confessions) But this, we know, would not have been sufficient to have influenced Milton to accept the belief; there were other reasons deeper than the current opinion of his age.

First, this belief is generally maintained throughout the Bible: Gen. 8:21, "for the imagination

of man's heart is evil from his youth." Ps. 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 22:15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child." Eccl. 9:3, "There is evil among all things that are under the sun. . . .yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil. . ." Isaiah 53:6, "All we, like lost sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." Rom. 3:10, "There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. . . ." Rom. 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." ver. 19, "For. . .by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. . .."

There is another reason as well, why Milton should accept the Bible literally on this point and attempt no elaborate explanations of difficult passages; and this reason is to be found in his conception of matter. As we have seen, he conceived of matter as eternal and divine, and the difference between matter and spirit not one of kind, but of degree. The connection between body and soul, then, is not an artificial transitory one, but fixed and lasting. The soul of man is prop-

ogated with the body and is passed on from one generation to another as is the physical part of man. The soul of the first man then having been corrupted through his fall, the souls of all his descendants carry the same taint. If Milton had not believed as firmly as he did in the inseparable connection between mind and matter, it would have been easy for him to deny original sin, for he would have considered the soul of each individual as coming directly from God, and it is not easy to think of God as making tainted souls throughout the centuries simply because the first man had sinned. But when the soul is considered as being propogated with physical part of man it is easy to believe that every soul is influenced by the defection of the first.

> . . . . .But from me what can proceed
> But all corrupt -- both mind and will depraved
> Not to do only, but to will the same
> With me? . . . . . .
> (P. L. Bk. 10, 824)

The problem of evil itself is always a hard one for the Christian believer to solve. It is hard to understand why an Omnipotent Being who is himself just and good should ever have allowed evil and misery to creep into his world. Church creeds may say that God "purposed it for his own glory," but that does

little to solve the problem as far as man himself is concerned. Milton himself liked a very rational explanation of everything; he preferred to put his trust in nothing which could not be explained in terms of human understanding; and so in Paradise Lost, we have an explanation of the origin of evil so simple and rational that even a child could follow it: Before the world was made, God and his angels lived together in heaven, and were very happy and congenial until one day God set over the angels his only Begotten Son, whom they were to obey and honour as God himself. The angels, very much like Milton's own political party in England and very much the same reason, rebelled against what they considered injustice:

> Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!
> Too much to one! but double how endured --
> . . . . . .
> Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
> The supple knee? He will not, if I trust
> To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
> Natures and Sons of Heaven possessed before
> By none, and, if not equal all, yet free,
> Equally free; for orders and degrees
> Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
> . . . . . .
> Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
> And equal over equals to let reign,
> One over all with unsucceeded power!
> (Bk 5, 782, P. L.)

The rebellious angels however were not as success-

ful as the Parliamentarians, and were consigned to Hell. There, plotting revenge, they remembered that God had spoken of making a world and peopling it with human beings; and they conceived the idea of drawing away from God his latest creation; thus revenging themselves against the Almighty and taking out their spite on mankind who were to fill heaven in their room. And so the entrance of sin into the world is accounted for in a very understandable manner, as far as we may take this explanation of it to represent Milton's. But even then, we must admit that this explanation only solves the question of the entrance of sin into earth; the source of its origination in heaven now becomes the mystery.

Original sin was of course not in the first man, who was created pure, and so we may consider him as having complete freedom in the matter and no innate inclination one way or the other. Milton is very careful throughout to emphasize this, that the first man was not impelled one way or the other, the blame rests entirely with himself and is not to be attached at all to God. God foreknew it, it is true, but that had no effect in inclining man one way or the other.

. . . . . .if I foreknow,
Foreknowledge [illegible] influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
(P. L. Bk. 3, 117)

Man was free then as he has never been since and had enough strength and reason to have stood in his freedom:

-- Man with strength entire and free will armed
Complete to have discovered and repulsed
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
(P. L. Bk. 10, 9)

And so, sin is ready to enter the world, and man is equipped with sufficient reason and resistance to withstand the attacks of God's adversary when he comes. But the logical question that makes itself felt here is: why did God not restrict Satan to Hell, why did He allow him to enter the world, in this first place, to corrupt Eve, and to bring to mankind all the troubles of sin? And here, in one of his strange deviations from interpretations of pure reason and absolute liberty, Milton sets forth in Paradise Lost the orthodox theory that it was for the glory of God:

. . . . . .the Archfiend lay,
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs
. . . . . .
So that he might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
On Man by him seduced, ... (Bk. 1, [illegible])

And so sin actually entered the world, and in theory at least, Milton seems to believe that practically all the weaknesses of the human race were involved in that one act of eating the apple: "It comprehended at once, distrust in the divine veracity, and a proportionate credulity in the assurances of Satan; unbelief; ingratitude; disobedience; gluttony; in the man excessive uxoriousness, in the woman a want of proper regard for her husband, in both an insensibility to the welfare of their offspring, and that offspring the whole human race; parricide, theft, invasion of the rights of others, sacrilege, deceit; presumption in aspiring to divine attributes, fraud in the means employed to attain the object, pride and arrogance." (p. 354)

But when he describes the incident in Paradise Lost, one feels him sympathizing with the transgressor and putting forth the logical objections to the Biblical story; even though these words are put in the mouth of Satan they are characteristic Miltonic objections.

> . . . . . .All is not theirs, it seems;
> One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,
> Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?
> Suspicious, reasonless! Why should their Lord
> Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?
> Can it be death? And do they only stand
> By ignorance? Is that their happy state,
> The proof of their obedience and their faith?
> (Bk. 4, 513)

In the Biblical story, Satan tells Eve, "in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:5) And that was what actually happened "Behold man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." (Gen. 3:22) But why does God consider it so wrong for man to know good and evil? If man had been to continue knowing only good, he would never, as Milton would argue, have been able to give God any pleasure in his obedience: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race. . . ." (Areopagitica) Milton puts into the mouth of Satan the conclusion that the fear was not so much that man would know good and evil, but that they would become as gods.

> Why, then, was this forbid? Why but to awe,
> Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
> His worshippers? He knows that in the day
> Ye eat thereof your eyes, that seem so clear,
> Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
> Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,
> Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
> (Bk. 9, 703)

Even in the Biblical story, it is suggested clearly that God feared or envied the potential power of man. After the sin, God himself says, "man has be-

come as one of us, to know good and evil," and then sends him forth from the garden, where the tree of life was: "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." (Gen.3:22,) This, Milton makes Satan take to the conclusion, that if it was envy or fear in the case of the tree of life, it was the same reason that made God withhold from Adam and Eve the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:

> . . . . . .And wherein lies
> The offence, that Man should thus attain to know?
> What can your knowledge hurt him, or this Tree
> Impart against his will, if all be his?
> Or is it envy? And can envy dwell
> In Heavenly breasts? . . . . . .
> (Bk. 9, 725)

and later: One of Eve's arguments in Book 9 is distinctly like several of Milton's own in similar circumstances.

> For good unknown, sure is not had, or had
> And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
> In plain, then, what forbids he but to know?
> Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise!
> Such prohibitions bind not. . . . . .
> (Bk. 9, 756)

One is reminded here of Milton's emphatic statements in his earlier political writings, that we are released from our oaths to a king as soon as he becomes a tyrant, to the effect that "such agreements bind not;" and of his statement in the Christian Doctrine in the chapter on Oaths that an oath to a robber or wicked person need not be considered as

binding: "Considering the robber . . . .as one with whom. . . .we can be under no engagement either of religious obligation, or civil right or private duty, it is clear that no agreement can be lawfully entered into with one thus circumstanced. If then under the influence of compulsion we have sworn to perform any such act as that above described, we have only committed a single offence; but if from religious scruples we observe an oath extorted under such circumstances, the sin is doubled. . . ." In short, "such oaths bind not." Despite his stand that God made made man sufficient to have stood though free to fall, Milton must have felt that his strength was, after all, of a rather inferior order. The word "frail" as applied to man and his condition occurs over and over again throughout Milton's poems. And he seems, in spite of himself, to feel that the part Satan had to play was an easy one, that the task of seducing Him should have been a little more difficult, if it was to affect mankind from one generation to another.

> . . . . .Him by fraud I have seduced
> From his Creator, and, the more to increase
> Your wonder, with an apple! He, thereat
> Offended -- worth your laughter! -- hath given up
> Both his beloved Man and all his World
> To Sin and Death a prey . . . . . .
> (Bk. 10, 485)

The thought also seems to have been in his mind that Satan had escaped with very little punishment in comparison to man who was to suffer sin and misery throughout the ages in consequence of that one act,

> . . . . .That which to me belongs
> Is enmity, which he will put between
> Me and Mankind: I am to bruise his heel;
> His seed -- when is not set -- shall bruise my head!
> A world who would not purchase with a bruise,
> Or much more grevious pain? . . . .
> (Bk 10, 496)

Such questions, of course, are the natural result of the acceptance of the doctrine of original sin; for this doctrine, putting a bondage on human liberty as it did, was out of harmony with Milton's most fundamental need, that of almost unlimited freedom. With a conflict of this sort, there are almost inevitable questions regarding the sin of the first man, whether it was after all, such a serious sin, and whether he was really strong enough to withstand his temptation, and indeed whether it was just that all men should suffer for the fault of their common ancestor:

> . . . . . .Ah, why should all Mankind,
> For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemned?
> (Bk. 10, 822)

However, now that we have traced the origin of sin, and have seen it establish itself among men we must go back a few years and consider the quest-

ion of sin as discussed in the Christian Doctrine. The first problem is to exonerate God from the charge of having caused sin.

"But.. . . A greater difficulty still remains - how that which is in its nature peccable can have proceeded . . . .from God? I ask in reply, how anything peccable can have originated from the virtue and efficacy which proceeded from God? Strictly speaking, indeed it is neither matter nor form that sins; and yet having proceeded from God, and become in the power of another party, what is there to prevent them, inasmuch as they have now become mutable, from contracting taint and contamination from the enticements of the devil, or those which originate in man himself?" (p 180 C.D.)

In his effort to vindicate the Deity, Milton here seems inconsistent with himself - he is not his reasonable, rational self. He insists the God could not have created the world out of nothing, that there must have been some material to begin with. He insists also that God created everything on earth and in heaven, but he tries to believe and to make his readers believe that evil originates of itself, from nothing, and that God has had nothing

to do with it, and he gives no satisfactory explanation whatever as to the actual source of evil.

Speaking of Rom. 1.28: "God gave them over to a reprobate mind". 2 Thess. 2.11. "God shall send them a strong delusion that they shall believe a lie." he writes, "but though in these as well as in many other passages of the Old and New Testament, God distinctly declares that it is himself who impels the sinner to sin, who hardens his heart, who blinds his understanding, and leads him into error; yet on account of the infinite holiness of the Deity, it is not allowable to consider him as in the smallest instance the author of sin. . . For it is not the human heart in a state of innocence and purity that is induced by him to act wickedly and deceitfully; but after it has conceived sin, - - -he, in his character of sovereign disposed of all things, inclines and biasses it in this or that direction, or towards this or that object." (C.D. p. 202 - 3) This seem a fair enough distinction, but we still have no solution as to the origin of sin.

Even where Godhimself says that he creates sin,

Milton will not allow it. Isaiah 45:7, "I make peace and create evil," "That is," writes Milton, "what afterwards became evil, and now remains so; for whatever God created was originally good, as he himself testifies." (Gen. 1; Matt. 18:7) (C. D. p. 200)

The final result of the discussion, then, is that sin rests not with God, but with man alone, for man is inwardly sinful and has brought it on himself, while salvation rests with God alone and not with man, for it is only by God's grace that man can be saved. Milton's great struggle throughout this question is to retain for man his free will and individual responsibility, and yet not undervalue the grace of God and its power; and in a rather roundabout way he succeeds in keeping man's freedom and God's omnipotence. If he allows that all men are by nature sinful, then God's grace is necessary, God is supreme in the matter of salvation; and then he insists that each individual receives enough grace for salvation, then man retains his individual responsibility — and is freed, by God alone, from the curse of original sin.

The usual accompaniment of the doctrine of original sin is the belief that the flesh itself is sinful. It is not necessary to read very far in Milton to see

that Milton was not his belief; we find him in his prose works more than once openly [illegible] belief, and speaking of "distaken chastity, not commendable" (History of Britain, p. 147), and in Paradise Lost in such passages as the two following his attitude is plainly shown:

> Then was not guilty shame. Dishonest shame
> Of nature's works, honour dishonourable,
> Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
> (Bk. 4, 313)

and later in the same book:

> Whatever hypocrite austerely talk
> Of purity, and place, and innocence,
> Defaming as impure what God declares
> Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
> Our maker bids increase; who bids abstain
> But our destroyer, foe to God and man?
> (l. 744)

These two attitudes, so commonly opposed to one another, the belief in original sin, and the rejection of asceticism, may be explained in Milton by one fundamental principle common to both. This principle,—namely, that matter is as eternal as spirit, and comes from the same source, from God himself, allowed Milton, in the first place to accept the doctrine of original sin. For if he had conceived of matter and spirit as widely separated and the soul as coming directly from God for each earthly body, he would never have allowed the belief either that God made each soul impure at its origin, or that he made them pure and

delivered them up to sinful bodies, * -- that is, he would never have admitted the doctrine of original sin. But believing as he did that soul and body are inseparably joined it was easy for him, though not necessary, to accept the common interpretation of the Bible on this question and believe that the taint of Adam was passed on in the soul, the sinning part of man, from generation to generation. This same theory that matter is divine justifies the belief usually opposed to the doctrine of original sin, that the body itself is not sinful. And this position is strictly logical, for if we believe that matter is divine and has proceeded from God himself, then to say that what He created of himself and by himself is by nature sinful, is really to accuse the Deity of sin. It is, then, the theoryof the Divinity of matter that makes easy the retention of these beliefs in complete harmony in the one system.

Before leaving the question of sin, its punishment must be considered. Besides the punishment of this world, such as the terrors of conscience and the loss

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* (Christian Doctrine p.192 v. 1)

of original righteousness, Milton accepts the mortality of man as a punishment of sin, and also agrees to punishment in the life after death. But he insists, as we should expect him to do, that if all men do not sin to the same degree it is not just nor reasonable that they should be punished to the same degree. His punishment for the damned is eternal, according to scripture: "The second death, or the punishment of the damned, seems to consist partly in the loss of the chief good, namely the favour and protection of God. . . . .and partly in eternal torment. . . ." (p. 489, C.D.) Eternal torment seems, to say the least, an uncompromising sentence, but nevertheless Milton insists that the punishment will vary according to the demerits of the individual: "Punishment, however, varies according to the degree of guilt." And this he bases on two passages in the Bible, which certainly seem to support his view. Matt. 11:22, "it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you." Luke 12:47, 48, "he shall be beaten with many stripes. . . . .he shall be beaten with few stripes." He gives us no explanation of how the varying degrees of eternal torment

are to be carried out, he simply leaves it with the statement, supported by scripture that it will be so. And here we leave the question of sin.

XI

GENERAL SURVEY AND CONCLUSION.

In the general survey of Milton's work, one fact stands forth with particular prominence, and this is, that he changed from an almost complete acceptance of the orthodox opinion, on the more abstract questions, at least, to as universal an overthrow of the most commonly accepted doctrines. The first indication of his independence of thought on religious questions is shown in his divorce tracts; and this independence gains more and more strength until, in The Christian Doctrine, his heterodoxy shows itself in almost every chapter. This departure from generally received opinions is the almost inevitable result of his nature, and the external influences to which it was subjected. The circumstances of his life which gave most impetus to his independence of thought are, very briefly, these: his early rebellion against what he considered tyranny in the Church of England, resulting in his decision to give up his chosen vocation sooner than submit to this tyranny: his later disappointment in the Presbyterian church, when their intolerant attitude over his divorce tracts made him aware of the interval which lay between himself and them; his growing conviction that this church, which had merely

substituted the Directory for the Prayer-Book was no more inclined to allow intellectual liberty than the Church of England had been; and finally his indignation aroused by the attitude of the Presbyterians towards the death of Charles I, where Milton considered that they had encouraged the rebellion and the final result, but withdrawn their support when it came to the actual execution. Naturally, feeling as he did toward the representatives of these two churches, Milton would not be inclined to base his theology on their opinions, and so, as soon as his political career left him sufficient free time, he set out with the Bible as his only guide, to compile his own system of theology. Thus we have the Christian Doctrine.

It is generally assumed that the Christian Doctrine was written between 1655-60; and in this case, the writing of the first pages coincided closely with the Proclamation, early in 1655, which guaranteed religious liberty under the Protectorate. Cromwell was throughout, not so much as matter of principle, as by result of his humantarian disposition, inclined to restrict religious persecution on all sides; and so Milton was, in these years, free to compile in fairly unrestrained terms a system of theology that was the result of long years of pondering, and of

growing conflict with received opinions.

It is of really comparatively little significance for our discussion that Milton in his later works broke away from the orthodox opinions. For a growing heterodoxy does not necessarily mean a decline in reliance on the bible. Indeed, an unorthodox person may often be more dependent on the Bible itself than one who takes as the foundation for his beliefs the interpretation of other men. In his introduction to the Christian Doctrine, Milton announces his intention "to adhere to the Holy Scriptures alone," to "follow no other heresy or sect." and practically every statement of this treatise is supported by the Bible,— as a rule directly from the texts, and sometimes indirectly by reasonings based on allied Biblical passages. It is true that sometimes the interpretations are elaborate, the conclusions are not the obvious ones, but the result of hard labour. But the fact that he struggled with uncompromising passages, and found though often with great difficulty, interpretations that supported his theory show how very necessary it was for him to feel that he had based every word of his theological beliefs on the Bible; and that his support from that source was unquestionable.

And if some interpretations seem strained, we

must remember that from the Bible, written as it was by so many different men, it is difficult to compile a consistent one-man system of theology, and if Milton was determined to insist upon complete support on every point, he almost had to reinterpret some passages. It must be remembered, also, that all through his life, as well as in the organization of his theological theories there was a great struggle going on between the two sides of his nature, between his almost aggressive independence, and his conviction that God was above all, and that the Bible was God's direct message to man. This struggle shows itself in more ways than one: there is the conflict between the liberty of man and the restrictions of Biblical texts; the need for rational ground in belief and the somewhat mystical tone of Biblical teachings; and lastly, the struggle between man's freedom of will and God's omnipotence, both of which he considered necessary to true religion. In the first of these, the question of liberty, it is worth noting that he seldom surrendered this in practical affairs of life, for the sake of literal acceptance of Biblical texts; if the Bible conflicted with his opinion on liberty he re-interpreted the text, — . .as we have seen him do on the question of divorce, and later in his

discussion as to whether Christian believers are bound to any extent by the Mosaic laws. In the struggle between reasonable and mystic belief, reason usually won, even though it might mean pages of interpretation devoted to a few words from the Bible, as we have seen in his elaborate discussions on the question of Trinity. The last conflict is the most serious of all, that between man's liberty and God's supreme, exclusive power. We have seen in the last chapters the great difficulty that this problem gave Milton; we have seen him striving to interpret predestination and foreknowledge in such a way as to keep God supreme and man free and responsible for his actions; and yet we have seen him accept literally and without re-interpretation such difficult beliefs as original sin and the exclusive efficacy of divine grace, in such a way to convince us that, after all, God meant more than man to Milton, in his system of theology.

His confidence in each man's power to interpret the Bible for himself without reliance on other men's interpretations was a confidence that was bound at last to transcend the confines of the written word, and to insist upon man's power to see the truth guided by God's light alone within us. And toward the end of the Christian Doctrine we find this result definitely

set forth: ". . . although the external ground which we possess for our belief at the present day in the written word is highly important, and in most instances at least, prior in point of reception, that which is internal, and the peculiar possession of each believer, is far superior to all, namely the Spirit itself.

"For the external Scripture, or written word, particularly of the New Testament . . . . has been liable to frequent corruption, and in some instances has been corrupted, through the number, and occasionally the bad faith of those by whom it has been handed down, the variety and discrepancy of the origional manuscripts, and the additional diversity produced by subsequent transcripts and printed editions. But the spirit which leads to truth cannot be corrupted, neither is it easy to deceive a man who is really spiritual. . . . .It is difficult to conjecture the purpose of Providence in committing the writings of the New Testament to such uncertain and variable guardianships, unless it were to teach us by this very circumstance that the Spirit which is given to us is a more certain guide than Scripture, whom therefore it is our duty to follow. (C.I. p.447-9)

In his later works there are many similar references to the need of interpretation by the Spirit, and to

the inward light of man as the final reliable guide to truth: "the gospel, our new covenant, (is written) upon the heart of every believer, to be interpreted only by the sense of charity and inward persuasion." (The Treatise of Civil Power, etc. 1659.), or as he puts it in Paradise Lost.

> . . . . . .the truth
> . . . . . .
> Left only in those written records pure,
> Though not but by the Spirit understood.
> (Book 12..L.511)

and in Paradise Regained,

> God. . . . . .
> . . . .sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
> In pious hearts, an inward oracle
> To all truth requisite for men to know.
> (Book 1..L. 460)

The conclusion of the discussion then, is briefly this: in the early years of his life, Milton was inclined to see God through the church and through other men's interpretation of the Bible; then, for most of the years he saw his Maker through the Bible alone, the Bible interpreted by the light of reason, as he was convinced God would have us interpret it; but in his later years he tended more and more to see God through man's spirit alone, through that image of God within us that he gave us a guide to truth, "to all truth requisite for men to know."

APPENDIX

Passages in Which a Direct Reference is made to the Bible

1625 Letter -- Thomas Young.

> I long since received your desirable present of the Hebrew Bible.

1627 Elegy IV -- To his Tutor Thomas Young.

> Perchance you will come upon him as he turns the massive tomes of the ancient Fathers, or the sacred books of the true God.

1641 Reformation in England.

364 - v:ii Sad it is to think how that doctrine of the gospel, planted by teachers divinely inspired -- should -- drag so downward --.

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367 - v:ii -- and the sweet odour of the returning gospel imbathe his soul with the fragrance of heaven. Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the dusty corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it --

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404 - viii Their eyes ever eminent upon worldly matters -- instead of diligent and fervent study of the Bible --

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1641 Of Prelatical Episcopacy

P. 421 If it be of divine constitution,

to satisfy us fully in that, the scrip-
only is able, it being the only book
left us of divine authority.

P. 422 -- they began after own lusts to heap to themselves teachers, and as if the divine scripture wanted a supplement, and were to be eked out --

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P. 424 Since therefore antiquity itself hath turned over the contreversy to that sovereign book (the Bible) which we had fondly straggled from --

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P. 430 -- with less fervency was studied what St. Paul or St. John had written, than was listened to one that could say, "Here he taught, here he stood, this was his stature --"

P. 433 -- for what our Lord and his diciples taught, God be thanked, we have no need to go learn of him (Hegesippus, an historian)

P. 435 -- yet for all this the worldly emperor Theophilus, even in those dark times, chose rather to nourish himself and his people with the sincere milk of the gospel --

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P. 435 If we, therefore, making first the gospel our rule and oracle, shall take the good which we shall light on in the fathers --

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P. 457 But if any shall strive to set up his ephad and teraphim of antiquity against the brightness andpperfection of the gospel; let him fear lest he and his Baal be turned into Bosheth.

1641 Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence.

P. 66 -- for certainty every rule and instrument of necessary knowledge that God hath given us, ought to be so in proportion, as may be weilded and managed by the life of man, without penning him up from the duties of human society; and such a rule and instrument of knowledge perfectly is the holy Bible.

P. 67 We shall adhere close to the scriptures of God, which he hath left us as the just and adequate measure of truth, fretted and proportioned to the diligent study, memory, and use of every faithful man, whose every part consenting and making up the harmonious symmetry of complete instruction, is able to set out to us a perfect man of God.

P. 76 It is not ordination nor jurisdiction that is angelical, but the heavenly message of the gospel, --

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1641 Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy.

P. 439 -- But this practice we may learn from a better and more ancient authority than any heathen writer hath to give us; and indeed being a point of so high wisdom and worth, how could it be but we should find it in that book, within whose sacred context all

wisdom is unfolded? Moses, therefore, the only law-giver that we can believe to have been visibly taught of God -- began from the book of Genesis --

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P. 441 Let others, therefore, dread and shun the scriptures for their darkness; I shall wish I may deserve to be reckoned among those who admire and dwell upon them for their clearness.

P. 443 And therefore all the ancient law-givers were either truly inspired, as Moses, or were such men as with authority enough might give it out to be so, as Minos, Lycurgus, Numa --

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P. 459 -- that God's command in scripture, which doubtless ought to be the first and greatest reason of church government --

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P. 484 First, mistrusting to find the authority of their order in the immediate institution of Christ, or his apostles by the clear evidence of scripture, they fly to the carnal supportment of tradition, when we appeal to the Bible, they to the unweildly volumes of tradition --

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P. 485 But let them chant while they will of prerogatives, we shall tell them of scripture; of custom, we of scripture; of acts and statutes, still of scripture; till the quick and peircing word enter to the divining of

their souls, and the mighty weakness of the gospel throw down the weak mightiness of man's reasoning.

P. 492 But in the gospel which is the straightest and dearest covenant can be made between God and man --

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1641 An Apology for Smectymnuus.

P. 95 I resolved -- to stand on that side where I saw the plain authority of scripture leading, and the reason of justice and equity persuading.

P. 139 We also reverence the martyrs, but rely only upon the scriptures.

1643 Doctrine and Dicipline of Divorce

Pp. 177-8 Ye have an author great beyond exception, Moses; and one yet greater, he who hedged in from abolishing every smallest jot and tittle of precious equity contained in that law --

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1644 On Education

P. 472 After this, they are to dive into the grounds of law, and legal justice; delivered first and with the best warrant by Moses --

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1644 The Judgment of Martin Bricer
(Address to the Parliament)

P. 280 -- what time I first undertook

it -- and had only the infallible grounds of scripture to be my guide.

1644 Areopagitica

P. 89 Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended and his apostles after him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of decievers --

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P. 346 If any shall ask, why, "domestic" in the definition? I answer, that because both in the scriptures, and in the gravest poets and philosophers, I find the properties and excellencies of a wife set out only from domestic virtues --

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P. 365 -- by the rules of nature and external righteousness, which no written law extinguishes and the gospel least of all.

P. 366 -- and shall content me here to have shown briefly, that the great and almost only commandment of the gospel is, to command nothing against the good of man, and much more, no civil command against his civil good.

1649 Eikonoklastes

P. 403 For all antiquity that adds or

varies from the scripture, is no more warranted to our safe imitation, than what was done the age before at Trent.

P. 420 However, nothing can be to us catholic or universal in religion, but what the scripture teaches; whatsoever without scripture pleads to be universal in the church, in being universal is but the more schismatical.

P. 422 But what avails the most primitive antiquity against the plain sense of scripture? which if the last century have best followed, it ought in our esteem to be the first.

P. 424 But matters of this moment as they were not to be decided by these divines, so neither are they to be determined here by essays and curtal aphorisms, but by solid proofs of scripture.

P. 435 They on the other side finding themselves in a high dignity, neither founded by scripture, nor allowed by reformation, nor supported by any spiritual gift or grace of their own, knew it their best source to have dependence only on him; --

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P. 436 As for histories to prove bishops, the Bible, -- If we mean not to run into errors, vanities and uncertainties, -- must be our only history.

P. 494 This is their doom written Rev. 19, and the utmost that we find concerning them in these latter days; which we have much more cause to believe, than his (King Charles') unwarranted revelation here, prophesying what shall follow after his death, with the spirit of enmity, not of St. John.

1651 A Defence of the People of England.

P. 53 Which yet you have proved neither from scripture, nor from any good author.

P. 60 -- let us consider whether or no the gospel, that heavenly promulgation, as it were, of Christian liberty, reduce us to a condition of slavery.

P. 89 Whatever they say, which is not warranted by the authority of the Scriptures, or by good reason, shall be of no more regard by me, than if any other ordinary man had said it,

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1654 The Second Defence of the People of England.

P. 274 Other camps are the scenes of gamboling, swearing riot and debauchery; in ours, the troops employ what leisure they have in searching the Scriptures and hearing the word; --

1656 Familiar Letter to Count Henry Oldenburgh

P. 510 Those ancient records of the Chinese -- are no doubt on account of

their novelty expected with avidity; but I do not see what authority or support they add to the books of Moses.

1655 - 60 The History of Britain.

P. 164 The beginning of nations, those excepted of whom sacred books have spoken.

P. 264 -- but in true saving knowledge leave them still as gross and stupid as themselves; bunglers at the Scripture, nay, forbidding and silencing them that know; --

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P. 307 The causes of these calamities, and the ruin of that kingdom, Alciun -- attributes in several epistles, and well may, to the general ignorance and decay of learning -- ; their neglect of breeding up youth in the Scriptures,--

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P. 309 -- some betook them -- others to religious idleness and solitude, which brought forth nothing but vain and delusive visions; easily perceived such by their commanding of things, either not belonging to the gospel, or utterly forbidden, --

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1655 - 60 Christain Doctrine

Dedication

P. 2 -- I resolved not to repose on the faith or judgment of others, in matters relating ot God; but on the

one hand, having taken the grounds of my faith from divine revelation alone, and on the other, having neglected nothing which depended upon my own industry, I thought fit to scrutinize and ascertain for myself the several points of my religious belief, by the most careful perusal and meditation of the Holy Scriptures themselves.

P. 3 I deemed it therefore safest and most advisable to compile for myself, by my own labour and study, some original treatise which should be always at hand, derived solely from the word of God itself, and executed with all possible fidelity, seeing that I could have no wish to practice any imposition on myself in such a matter.

P. 5 Nor do I see how the Church can be more disturbed by the investigation of truth, than were the Gentiles by the first promulgation of the gospel; since so far from recommending or inspiring anything on my own authority, it is my particular advice that every one should suspend his opinion on whatever points he may not feel himself fully satisfied, till the evidence of Scripture prevail, and persuade his reason into assent and faith.

P. 8 For my part I adhere to the Holy Scriptures alone, I follow no other heresy or sect.

The Christain Doctrine

P. 11 This doctrine therefore is to be

obtained, not from the schools of the philosophers, nor from the laws of man, but from the Holy Scriptures alone, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

P. 16 No is it only to pay the penalty of their own guilt that they (the Jews) have been served in their scattered state -- but also to be a perpetual and living testimony to all people under heaven of the existance of God, and of the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

P. 17 It is better therefore to contemplate the Deity, and to conceive of him -- after the manner of Scripture, that is, in the way wherein God has offered himself to our contemplation; --

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P. 33 It appears, therefore, from these passages of Scripture, as well as from many others of the same kind, to which we must bow as to a paramount authority, that the most high God has not decreed all things absolutely.

P. 33 So, indeed, it is asserted, but not in the authority of Scripture; and the silence of the Scripture would alone be sufficient reason for rejecting the doctrine.

P. 78 But since I enrol myself among the number of those who acknowledge the word of God alone as the rule of faith, and freely advance what appears

to me much more clearly deducible from the Holy Scriptures than the commonly received opinion, I see no reason why anyone -- should take offence at my freedom --

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P. 78 For without intending to oppose the authority of Scripture, which I consider inviolably sacred, I only take upon myself to refute human interpretations --

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P. 87 Let us then discard reason in sacred matters, and follow the doctrine of Holy Scriptures exclusively.

P. 92 Scripture saith, and the Son saith, I and my Father are one, -- I bow to their authority. Certain commentators conjecture that they are one in essence, -- I reject what is merely man's invention

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P. 110 Reason rejects the doctrine; Scripture no where asserts it, let us therefore abandon human devices, and follow the evangelist himself who is his own interpreter.

P. 149 Such was the faith of the saints respecting the Son of God; such is the tends of the celebrated confession of that faith; such is the doctrine which alone is taught in Scripture, which is acceptable to God, and has the promise of eternal salvation.

P. 151 With regard to nature of the Spirit, in what manner it exists or whence it arose, Scripture is silent; which is a caution to us not to be too hasty in our conclusion on the subject.

P. 151 Since therefore the Spirit is neither said to be generated nor created, nor is any other made of existence specifically attributed to it in Scripture, we must be content to leave undetermined a point on which the sacred writers have preserved so uniform a silence.

P. 159 It seems exceedingly unreasonable, not to say dangerous, that in a matter of so much difficulty, believers should be required to receive a doctrine, represented by its advocates as of primary importance and of undoubted certainty on anything less than the clearest testimony of Scripture; --

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P. 289 If we listen to such passages, and are willing to acquiesce in the simple truth of Scripture, unencumbered by metaphysical comments, to how many prolix and preposterous arguments shall we put an end! how much occasion of heresy shall we remove! how many ponderous volumes of dabblers in theology shall we cast out, purging the temple of God from the contamination of their rubbish! Nothing would be more plain, and agreeable to reason, nothing more suitable to the understanding even of the meanest individual, than such parts of the Christian faith as are declared in Scripture to be necessary for salvation, if teachers, even of the reformed

church, were as yet sufficiently impressed with the propiety of insisting on nothing but divine authority in matters relating to God, and of limiting themselves to the contents of the sacred volume.

P. 294 -- whether he retains his twofold will and understanding, is a point respecting which, as Scripture is silent, we are not concerned to inquire.

P. 441 If then the Scriptures be in themselves so perspicuous, and sufficient unto themselves to make men wise unto salvation through faith, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, through what infatuation is it, that even Protestant divines persist in darkening the most momentous truths of religion by intricate metaphysical comments. --

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P. 442 As if Scripture, which possess in itself the clearest light, and is sufficient for its own holiness, required to have the simplicity of its divine truths more full developed and placed in a more distinct view, by illustrations drawn from the abstrusest of human sciences, falsely called.

It is only to those who perish that the Scriptures are obscure, especially in things necessary for salvation.

P. 443 Lastly, no inferences from the text are to be admitted, but such as follow necessarily and plainly from the words themselves; lest we should be constrained to receive what is not written for what is written, the shadow for the substance, the fallacies of human reasoning for the doctrines of God; for it is by the declarations of Scripture, and not by the conclusions of the schools, that consciences are bound.

P. 445 The rule and canon of faith, therefore, is Scripture alone. Psalm 19:9. "the judgments of Jehovah are true and righteous altogether." Scripture is the sole judge of controversies; or rather, every man is to decide for himself through its aid, under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

Pp. 447 - 8 -- although the external ground which we possess for our belief at the present day in the written word is highly important, and in the most instances, at least, prior in point of reception, that which is internal and the peculiar possession of each believer, is far superior to all, namely the Spirit itself.

For the external Scripture, or written word, particularly of the New Testament -- has been liable to frequent corruption -- But the Spirit which leads to truth cannot be corrupted, neither is it easy to deceive a man who is really spiritual.

Pp. 448 - 9 The New Testament -- has come down to us -- through the hands of a multitude of persons, subject to various temptations; nor have we in any instance the original copy in the author's handwritind, by which to correct the errors of others -- It is difficult to conjecture the purpose of Providence in committing the writings of the New Testament to such uncertain and variable guardianship, unless it were to teach us by this very circumstance that the Spirit which is given to us is a more certain guide than Scripture, whom therefore it is our duty to follow.

1659 Familiar Letter -- John Badiaus.

P. 519 Oh happy are you whom -- Providence has rescued -- and selected to bear a distinguished and intrepid testimony to the truth of the gospel.

1659 A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes.

P. 522 What I argue shall be drawn from the Scripture only; and therein from true foundational principles of the gospel, to all knowing Christians undeniable.

P. 523 First, it cannot be denied, being the main foundation of our protestant religion, that we of these ages, having no other divine rule or authority from without us, warrantable to me another as a common ground, but the holy Scripture, and no other within us

but the illumination of the Holy Spirit, so interpreting that scripture as warrantable only to ourselves, and to such whose consciences we can persuade, can have no other ground in matters of religion but only from the scriptures.

P. 524 With good cause, therefore, it is the general consent of all sound Protestant writers, that neither traditions -- but the scripture only, can be the final judge or rule in matters of religion, and that only in the conscience of every Christian to himself.

P. 528 As the Samaritans believed Christ, first for the woman's word, but next and much rather for his own, so we the scripture: first on the church's word, but afterwards and much more for its own, as the word of God; yea, the church itself we believe then for the scripture. "The gospel our new covenant (is written) upon the heart of every believer to be interpreted only the sense of charity and unvaried persuasion."

1659 The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church.

P. 17 Of fathers, by custom so called, we quote Ambrose, Augustin and some other ceremonial doctors of the same leaven: whose assertion, without pertinent scripture, no reformed church can admit.

To heap such unconvincing citations as these in religion, whereof the scripture only is our rule, argues not much learning nor judgment, but the lost

labour of much unprofitable reading.

P. 22 The next thing to be considered in the maintainance of ministers is by whom it should be given. Wherein though the light of reason might sufficiently inform us, it be best to consult the scripture.

1659 On The Ruptives of the Commonwealth.

P. 104 The terms to be stood on are, liberty of conscience to all professing Scripture to be the rule of their faith and worship; --

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1659 - 60 The Ready Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth.

P. 111 -- to which (the laws of nature) no people or parliament that will thoroughly reform, but may and must have recourse, as they had, and must yet have, in church reformation (if they thoroughly intend it) to evangelic rules; --

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P. 133 That this is best pleasure of God, and that the whole protestant church allows no supreme judge or rule in matters of religion, but the Scriptures; and these to be interpreted by the Scriptures themselves, which necessarily infers liberty of conscience, I have hitherto proved at large in another treatise; --

---

1665 Paradise Lost. Bk. XII ll. 511 --

--- and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written Records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.

[illegible] of True Religion, Heresy, etc.

P. 515 If they say, that by removing their idols we violate their consciences, we have no warrant to regard conscience which is not grounded on scripture:

Shall we condescend to dispute with them? The scriture is our only principle in religion, and by that only they will not be judged, --

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P. 516 The next means to hinder the growth of popery will be, to read duly and diligently the holy scriptures, --

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